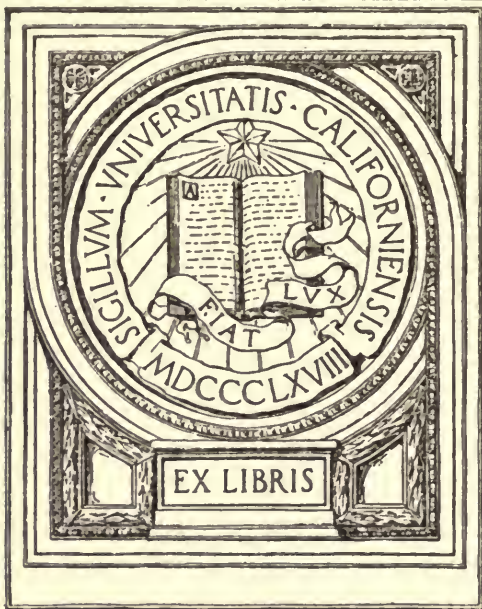


* The Art of *
Letter-writing

Nathaniel C. Fowler Jr.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES
BROWSING ROOM



F262-1-1
75-7

Library
Graduate School of Business Administration
University of California
Los Angeles 24, California



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE ART OF LETTER WRITING

Books by Nathaniel C. Fowler, Jr.

How to Obtain Citizenship
12 Mo. \$1.50 NET

The Art of Story Writing
The Handbook of Journalism
EACH, 12 Mo., \$1.25 NET

The Art of Letter Writing
1000 Things Worth Knowing
Stories and Toasts for After Dinner
EACH, 12 Mo., .75 CENTS NET

GEORGE SULLY & CO.
NEW YORK

THE ART OF LETTER WRITING

A PRACTICAL MANUAL COVER-
ING THE WHOLE FIELD OF
CORRESPONDENCE

BY

NATHANIEL C. FOWLER, JR.

AUTHOR OF "HOW TO SAVE MONEY," "HOW TO
OBTAIN CITIZENSHIP," "PRACTICAL SALESMANSHIP," ETC.

NEW YORK
GEORGE SULLY & COMPANY

Copyright, 1913
BY SULLY AND KLEINTEICH

All rights reserved

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

HF

5726

F82a

PREFACE

LETTER WRITING is one of the basic arts of civilization. Without the letter, and the mail to carry it, the world would return to the epoch of the prehistoric.

It is impossible to overestimate or to exaggerate the importance of the letter and the writing of a letter. The letter plays a second part only to conversation and to personal contact.

Because of the letter no one can remain a stranger, and to the letter writer no part of the civilized world is inaccessible.

The letter connects persons, and is the vehicle of the progress of business.

While neither the writer of this book, nor any one else, can teach by printed page, or orally, the great science or art of letter writing, the writer hopes that the contents of this book will be of at least indirect assistance to every one who uses the mails, and "every one" includes the whole world, with the exception of those inhabitants of it who are sufficiently illiterate to be unable to express themselves upon paper.

175080

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The importance of a letter	9
The opening of a letter; the name of the person addressed; illustrated	14
How to address an individual; illustrated	20
Titles and degrees in common use	23
The ending of a letter; illustrated	25
How to sign letters; illustrated	27
"Dear Sir," "Gentlemen," "Dear Mr. Smith," etc.; illustrated	30
Letters to officials; illustrated	32
Proper envelopes	36
Letter paper and envelope material	40
Transparent envelopes	43
Letter-heads; illustrated	44
Names and addresses on envelopes; illustrated	57
Addressing an envelope; illustrated	63
Care in addressing; illustrated	66
Stamping envelopes	68
Sufficient postage	69
Enclosing stamp for reply	70
The space between the lines of a letter	71
Business letters	73
Social letters	74
Circular or duplicate letters; illustrated	75
Follow-up letters; illustrated	81
Letters of solicitation; illustrated	83
Ordering goods; illustrated	90
Enclosures with letters; illustrated	92
Sending money by mail	97

	PAGE
Acknowledging the receipt of money; illustrated	98
Letters to foreign countries	99
Copying letters	101
Letters of application for a position; illustrated	103
Letters of introduction; illustrated	131
Letters to friends	134
Humorous letters	136
Letters of commendation and congratulation	138
Letters of condolence	140
Letters of proposal	142
Paragraphing	145
Capitalization	147
Abbreviations	149
The use of figures	150
Punctuation	151
Repetition of words	154
The use of foreign languages	155
The use of long words	156
Obsolete words	157
The writing of technical and scientific terms	158
Simplicity	159
Enclosing poetry in a letter	161
Phonetic spelling	163
Interlining	164
Plainness and correctness	165
The use of the typewriter	167
Handwriting	169
The post office	171
Foreign mail matter	174
Parcel post	176
Registered letters	178
Money orders	179
Unmailable matter	180
Care in mailing	181

THE ART OF LETTER WRITING

THE IMPORTANCE OF A LETTER

A LETTER is talk upon paper; but it is not as easy to write as it is to tell your story in spoken words, because when you talk, your audience is before you, and you can better adapt your words to the receiver who is present, than to one who is absent. If what you say when you talk is not right, and does not have the desired effect, you are likely to have opportunity to explain. What you say in a letter, however, must stand as it is, and is not subject to immediate correction or change. Therefore, the letter must be prepared with more care, and with more attention to detail, than is necessary for the spoken word.

It has been said, and with much truth, that nobody can write a letter, or any document, which is guaranteed to be fully and correctly understood by its receiver. Take a will, for

10 *The Art of Letter Writing*

example. No reputable lawyer, even though an expert at will drafting, will guarantee to produce a will which will meet all requirements and stand the test of the court. It is said that the best maker of wills in America did not write his own will so that it would hold, and that it was set aside by the court.

This being the case, it is obvious that no one can be sure of a letter, however carefully he may frame it, and though he give to it the nicest attention.

The letter writer, therefore, must do his best, for the more care he gives to his letter, the greater likelihood there is of its being properly interpreted by its receiver.

Perfection is impossible, but there is a vast difference between a carelessly thrown-together letter, and one which is intelligently written.

A large part of the business of the world is conducted by correspondence; and no one, save the illiterate, can maintain his position without the writing of social letters.

While I have attempted to present rules for letter writing, I must admit that outside of fundamental principles it is impossible to instruct any one so that he may become, by these instructions alone, an acceptable letter writer.

Individual judgment and common sense play important parts upon the stage of letter writing. One may be helped by suggestions, and even by

rules; but instruction alone is not sufficient. He must put himself into his letters. Proficiency exists only when one realizes their importance, and lets each experience aid him in producing better results.

I am opposed to the presentation of more than a few forms of the body of a letter, because such arbitrary examples would be of little use to the proficient letter writer; and the indifferent one, using them, would make his letters stunted and hard. One should, then, become familiar with suitable forms, and should adapt them to his conditions, but should not copy verbatim the style or wording of any writer.

Letters should be written personally, not be machine-made, and they should represent the sender.

First, attempt to comprehend clearly what you want to say, and then write it out, being sure that the matter is perfectly clear to you, at least. Then if the letter is too long, attempt to shorten it without removing anything essential from it, and rewrite it until you feel that it presents your case fairly well.

I would, most emphatically, advise letter writers to study carefully the letters received by them, and to remember the portions which especially appeal to them. We are very much alike, and it is, therefore, obvious that a letter

12 *The Art of Letter Writing*

which appeals to us, would impress another, providing that it is plain, clear, and distinct. Most people, and business men particularly, object to ornate rhetoric and to flowery expressions.

When writing a business letter, for instance, tell the receiver only what you feel that he wants to know, or will accept, — not necessarily all that you want him to know, or all that you want him to accept. He will stand just so much, and no more. Give him what he will take. There is no rule which will cover this. Here is where your judgment and common sense come into play. Experience, if you recognize it as a teacher, will do more for you than all of the rules and regulations and all of the books in Christendom.

The best I can do for you is to present fundamental principles of letter writing, suggest forms and styles to be avoided, and leave the rest to you.

I am not one of those who believe that everything, particularly the action of personality, can be taught as can academic science.

If your business letters do not bring returns, change them somewhat, or entirely. Study the letters of others, as you would your own stock in trade and your own methods of doing business; but do not accept any form in its entirety. Adapt the success of others, making those changes which are necessary for your particular

business. Always get down to rock bottom. Do not indulge in long introductions or explanations.

A business letter should be a statement of facts, or a plain, clean-cut, request or solicitation, expressed briefly, and yet comprehensively, within the understanding of its receiver.

Never put into your letter, unless it is one of collection, a demand; and never unqualifiedly tell the receiver what he should do. Present to him facts which you believe are to his interest. Avoid all reference to competitors, except in a very general way, and never say anything against the goods made by another house. Criticism of your competitors, and an attempt to belittle the value of their products, advertise the competitors more than they injure them.

What you have, not what others have, is your business. Present your own goods, and let other goods alone.

THE OPENING OF A LETTER

IF you are answering a letter, always start in with some expression like, "Your favor of the 15th inst. received," or, "Yours of the 15th inst. received," or, "Your letter of the 15th inst. received." This is very important, because the receiver is made at once to realize that your letter is in reply to his, and, therefore, merits immediate attention.

Under no circumstances, either in a business or social letter, begin by saying, "I take my pen in hand." This reminds me of a humorous incident, which was all right between friends, as it was sure to be understood as a joke. The writer wrote as follows: "Having nothing to do, I take my pen in hand. Having nothing to say, I close."

There is no objection to beginning a letter with some expression like "I take the liberty," etc., providing that you are asking a favor, or addressing a stranger other than upon the business in which he is interested.

Every effort should be made in the opening of a letter to state something which will create

immediate interest or attention on the part of the receiver. To use an expression of the street, "Don't beat 'round the bush." Get down to business, or get to your subject, at the start, without any preamble or lengthy introduction. If possible, refer to something which is of interest to the receiver. For example: if you are applying for a position, start in with some expression like, "I know how to sell groceries on the road, because I have successfully sold them. What I have done for others, I can do for you."

If you enclose a letter of introduction, begin your letter something as follows: "Enclosed find letter of introduction from our mutual friend, Mr. John W. Smith;" or, "I enclose letter of introduction from Mr. John W. Smith, President of the Smith Manufacturing Co." This immediately attracts the reader's attention, and shows that you have a social right to address him.

If you have already had a conversation with the person addressed, or if you write the letter because you have met him, then begin somewhat as follows: "Referring to our conversation of last Tuesday;" or, "You will recall our conversation in the smoking compartment of a Chicago train, last month;" or, "Referring to our conversation at the Union Club." This immediately locates you and properly in-

16 *The Art of Letter Writing*

troduces the subject upon which you are writing.

Business letters should begin about as follows:

Boston, Mass., Jan. 2, 1913.

Mr. John T. Smith,
New York City,

Dear Sir:

The title "Messrs." is used only when the firm name is made up of individual names. It may be used when the words "and Company" are added to these, as in "Messrs. Anderson, Farlow and Company," but is preferably omitted when a firm name like "The Smith-Hall Company," or "The Mason and Hudson Company," is given.

Firms may be addressed as follows:

Boston, Mass., Jan. 2, 1913.

Messrs. Smith, Jones & Co.,
Boston, Mass.,

Gentlemen: (or Dear Sirs:)

The title "Messrs." may be omitted.

Corporations should be addressed as follows:

Boston, Mass., Jan. 2, 1913.

Smith Manufacturing Co.,
Portland, Maine,

Gentlemen: (or Dear Sirs:)

The Art of Letter Writing 17

Some letter writers invariably place the address of the party written to after his name, as follows:

Mr. John W. Smith,
308 Bedford St.,
Boston, Mass.,

Dear Sir:

There is no objection to adding the street address, except that it takes up room and time. If you do not keep an address file or card index, but depend upon the copies of your letters for your addresses, each address should be invariably written in.

Many writers prefer to address an individual, if he occupies a responsible position, like that of General Manager, President, Treasurer, or Secretary, and use the following form:

Mr. John W. Smith, General Manager,
Smith Manufacturing Co.,
Boston, Mass.,

Dear Sir:

The name and address may be written at the close of the letter, and the date also; but it is better to place them all at the beginning of a letter.

18 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Of course, "Dear Sir," "Gentlemen," or "Dear Mr. Smith," or "My dear Mr. Smith," or "Dear Mary," or "My dear Mary," or "Dear John," or "My dear John," should precede the body of the letter in every case.

I present the following forms of letters where the full name and address are written at the close:

Boston, Mass., Jan. 8, 1913.

Dear Sir:

(Body of letter.)

To Mr. William R. White,
406 Main Street,
Portland, Maine.

If the date is not written at the opening of the letter, it should appear either above or below, preferably below, the name and address at the close of the letter.

Another form is presented:

Dear Mr. Smith:

(Body of letter.)

To Mr. William W. Smith,
76 Whitehall Avenue,
Omaha, Neb.

Jan. 7, 1913.

Some letter writers prefer to have the address lines, including the line reading "Dear Sir"

or "Gentlemen," justify at the left, as in the following example. There is no real objection to this, but the usual form of indenting the address line or lines is to be preferred.

Mr. John T. Smith,
406 Main Street,
Portland, Maine,
Dear Sir:

HOW TO ADDRESS AN INDIVIDUAL

IN addressing an individual, it is well to find out whether or not he has some military or other title. If he has, do not fail to use it. Military men, as a rule, are proud of their positions, even if unimportant, and resent being addressed as "Mr." or "Esq." The same may be said of those who, by virtue of office, are entitled to the title "Honorable."

Never address a person without prefixing to his name "Mr." or other title, or following his name with "Esq.," or with a proper degree. "Mr." is preferable to "Esq."

The following correct forms are presented:

Mr. John W. Blank.

John W. Blank, Esq.

Dr. John W. Blank.

John W. Blank, M. D.

Colonel John W. Blank.

Col. John W. Blank.

Rev. John W. Blank, D. D.

John W. Blank, D. D.

Rev. John W. Blank.

Professor John W. Blank.

John W. Blank, Ph. D., LL. D.

If the party addressed is entitled to the title of "Honorable," always address him, "Hon. John W. Blank."

Doctors, as a rule, prefer to have their degree, "M. D.," used, but "Dr." is permissible. Never address a doctor "Dr. John W. Blank, M. D.," but as "Dr. John W. Blank," or "John W. Blank, M. D."

Doctors of Divinity may be addressed in either of the following ways:

Rev. John W. Blank, D. D.

John W. Blank, D. D.

Rev. Dr. John W. Blank.

It is not necessary to spell out the words "Reverend" and "Doctor." The abbreviations (Rev. and Dr.) are in good taste.

Persons holding the degrees of Ph. D., LL. D., Litt. D., etc., may be addressed as "Dr.," and should be so addressed unless you follow their name with the degree. Do not use both "Dr." and the degree or degrees. Do not write, "Dr. John W. Smith, Ph. D."

When "Reverend" is spelled out, it is most correct to precede it with the article; as "The Reverend," etc.

Military titles, such as Colonel, General, and Captain, may be abbreviated Col., Gen., and

22 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Capt., but I would recommend the spelling out of the words.

The degree of Bachelor (B.) in any line is not usually written, because every college graduate possesses it. The Master (M.) and Doctor (D.) degrees, however, should be used as a matter of courtesy, for they are hard-earned titles, or else honorary because of distinguished service.

If one holds the title of Lieutenant Colonel, for example, he should be addressed as "Colonel" or "Col."

TITLES AND DEGREES IN COMMON USE

THE meaning of the titles and degrees in common use is as follows:

- A. B. or B. A., Bachelor of Arts.
- A. M. or M. A., Master of Arts.
- B. Agr., Bachelor of Agriculture.
- B. D., Bachelor of Divinity.
- B. L., Bachelor of Laws.
- B. M., or B. M^{us}., Bachelor of Music.
- B. Pd., Bachelor of Pedagogy.
- B. Ph., Bachelor of Philosophy.
- B. S., Bachelor of Surgery.
- B. S., or B. Sc., Bachelor of Science.
- D. C. L., Doctor of Canon Law.
- D. D., Doctor of Divinity.
- D. D. S. or D. M. D., Doctor of Dental Surgery.
- D. Litt., Doctor of Literature.
- D. M. or D. Mus., Doctor of Music.
- D. Ph., Doctor of Philosophy.
- D. Sc., Doctor of Science.
- D. V. S., Doctor of Veterinary Surgery.
- E. E., Electrical Engineer.

24 *The Art of Letter Writing*

E. D., Doctor of Electricity.
J. C. D., Doctor of Civil Law.
J. D., Doctor of Laws.
J. P., Justice of the Peace.
Jr., Junior.
Litt. B., or Lit. B., Bachelor of Literature.
Litt. D., or Lit. D., Doctor of Literature.
LL. B., Bachelor of Laws.
LL. D., Doctor of Laws.
M. Agr., Master of Agriculture.
M. C., Member of Congress.
M. D., Doctor of Medicine.
M. P., Member of Parliament.
M. P. C., Member of Parliament in Canada.
M. S., Master of Science.
Mus. B., Bachelor of Music.
Mus. D., Doctor of Music.
Pd. B., Bachelor of Pedagogy.
Pd. D., Doctor of Pedagogy.
Ph. B., Bachelor of Philosophy.
Ph. D., Doctor of Philosophy.
P. M., Postmaster.
Rev., Reverend.
S. B., or Sc. B., Bachelor of Science.
Sc. D., Doctor of Science.
S. T. B., Bachelor of Sacred Theology.
S. T. D., Doctor of Sacred Theology.
Rt. Hon., Right Honorable.
Rt. Rev., Right Reverend.
V. Rev., Very Reverend.

THE ENDING OF A LETTER

PRECEDING your name, at the close of a letter, should appear in a paragraph by itself some expression like "Yours truly," or "Yours very truly," or "Very truly yours," or "Yours respectfully," or "Respectfully yours," or "Yours sincerely," or "Sincerely yours," or "Very sincerely yours," or "Yours very sincerely," or "Affectionately yours," or "Yours affectionately."

The words "Respectfully yours," or "Yours respectfully," should be given preference when writing a stranger, although "Yours truly," or "Yours very truly," is permissible.

Expressions like "Sincerely yours," or "Affectionately yours," should be avoided, unless you are intimately acquainted with the party to whom you are writing. It is unnecessary, and in bad taste, to close a letter with, "Hoping to receive a reply."

There is no objection to writing "I am, Respectfully yours," but there is no necessity of using "I am."

If you are writing a personal friend, you

26 *The Art of Letter Writing*

may close with "With regards, sincerely yours," or "Affectionately yours."

Be very sure to write your name legibly, and do not sign it "J. T. Smith;" write "John T. Smith."

Do not spell out your middle name, unless you are an author or professional man, and your name in full appears in print. Even then, the spelling out of your middle name is questionable and suggests affectation.

When addressing one who does not know you, it is well to write out your name and address in the lower left-hand corner, so that there may be no confusion, unless your name is printed upon the letterhead. Even the plainest handwriting is not at times legible to the receiver, particularly if the name is not a common one.

HOW TO SIGN LETTERS

ALL letters, both business and social, should be signed, in whole or in part, with the pen. The use of the indelible pencil is not to be recommended, nor should any letter be signed in full on the typewriter.

The use of a rubber stamp for signatures is objectionable, as it indicates that the writer does not consider the letter of sufficient importance to warrant the trouble and time required for a pen signature. There is no objection, however, to the use of a typewriter or rubber stamp for the name of the firm or company, provided the name of an officer or manager follows it in ink. For example, the company or firm name may be typewritten or stamped as follows:

The Smith Manufacturing Company,
By (or per) John T. Smith,
President.

Or, John T. Smith & Company,
By (or per) George H. Smith,
Treasurer.

28 *The Art of Letter Writing*

The name of the official, and his title, "President" or "Treasurer," should be written with the pen, although it is permissible to typewrite or stamp "President" or "Treasurer."

Many business firms sign their letters in either of the following ways:

The Smith Manufacturing Company,
By George T. Smith, President,
Per Baxter.

Or,

The Smith Manufacturing Company,
By George T. Smith, President,
Per A. W. B.

Upon general principles it is well to avoid the signing of letters with initials preceded, or not, with "Per" or "By." Nor is it advisable to write "Per Baxter." If anything is to follow "Per" or "By," let the full name of the signer be affixed, to be followed with "Manager," "General Manager," "Secretary," etc.

Not to do this indicates to the receiver that the letter is not of sufficient importance to be personally signed by an official.

I would suggest that, if the official has not time personally to sign his letters, they be signed

by some secretary or clerk whose handwriting is similar to that of the official, except, of course, contracts, or letters of unusual importance.

Many large firms, having extensive correspondence, print upon their letters with a rubber stamp words somewhat like the following:

“This letter is dictated, but not read, by the President.”

I consider this not only in poor business form, but in very bad taste. It creates a suspicion on the part of the receiver that he is not of sufficient importance, or that the contents of the letter amount to so little, that an official does not deem it necessary even to read it. An opportunity for this misconception should be strenuously avoided.

Many business houses require their stenographers to write the initials of the writer and the initials of the stenographer in the lower left-hand corner of the letter. This has a value only as a matter of record, and there can be no real objection to it.

Social letters should always bear the signature of the writer, and it is not permissible to sign them with a rubber stamp or typewriter, or to have “Per A. B. C.” follow the signature.

“DEAR SIR,” “GENTLEMEN,” “DEAR
MR. SMITH,” ETC.

ALL business letters, unless semi-social or between intimate friends, should begin with “Dear Sir,” “Dear Sirs,” or “Gentlemen,” one of these salutations to follow the name and address of the party to whom the letter is addressed.

“Dear Sir” should be invariably used when addressing a stranger; but “Gentlemen” is preferable to “Dear Sirs,” when a letter is sent to a firm or company.

“My dear Sir” is permissible, when the parties are acquainted though the letter is formal, and may be used by one professional man writing to another of his class.

“Sir” and “Dear,” if preceded by “My,” may begin with either a capital or a small letter.

“My dear Mr. Smith,” or “Dear Mr. Smith,” should not be used in business, except between friends; but a social letter, or one of professional character between authors or others who are not in business, may begin “My dear

Mr. Smith " or " Dear Mr. Smith." For example, if an author, or other professional man, addresses another of his class or even a business man, if the subject of the letter be semi-business or altogether professional, he may write " Dear Sir," or " My dear Sir," or " My dear Mr. Smith," or " Dear Mr. Smith." But business letters, directed to business men, and upon purely business subjects, should almost invariably begin with " Dear Sir."

LETTERS TO OFFICIALS

LETTERS addressed to the President of the United States, officers of the Army and Navy, Ambassadors, and Members of the Diplomatic Corps, unless of social purport, must be extremely formal. The contents of the letter should be as brief as possible, with an absence of adjectives and with no flowery expressions or personal compliments. Abbreviations should be avoided. Never address a letter to the "Pres. of the United States," or to the "Sec'y of War." Spell out "President" and "Secretary."

Where there is only one official, it is not necessary to address him by his name. Simply address the letter

To His Excellency,
The President of the United States,
Executive Mansion,
Washington, D. C.
Mr. President, Sir:

Under no circumstances, unless you are a personal friend, address him as "Dear Mr. President," or "My dear Mr. President," and

never write "Dear Sir" or "My dear Sir." You may address him more simply, as

To the President of the United States,
Washington, D. C.

Mr. President, Sir:

The form used for the President of the United States applies to the Vice President, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. For example:

To the Vice President of the United States,

Mr. Vice President, Sir:

To the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States,

Mr. Chief Justice, Sir:

In addressing an Associate Justice, this form may be used:

To the Honorable John Smith,
Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States,

Washington, D. C.

Mr. Justice, Sir:

Judges of all Courts below the Supreme Court, should be addressed as "Honorable."

The Cabinet Officers may be addressed as follows:

To the Honorable Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.,

Sir: (or, Dear Sir:)

A member of a foreign legation, or a Gov-

34 *The Art of Letter Writing*

ernor of a State, may be addressed as "Your Excellency." Members of State Senates, Lieutenant Governors, and Members of Congress, Mayors, and Judges in general, should be addressed as "Honorable."

It is not necessary to write in the name of the Governor or Lieutenant Governor; simply address it to "His Excellency, The Governor of New York," or to "His Honor, The Lieutenant Governor of New York." Write "Sir" or "Dear Sir," never "My dear Sir" or "Dear Governor," unless you are personally acquainted with him.

Mayors, as a rule, should be addressed as follows:

The Hon. John Smith,
Mayor of New York City,
Sir: (or, Your Honor:)

Officers in the Army and Navy should be addressed:

General John C. Smith,
Brigadier General,
United States Army,
Washington, D. C.,

Sir:

The Commander General of the United States should be addressed as follows:

To Major General John T. Smith,
Commanding Officer;
or, To Major General John T. Smith,

Commanding the Army of the United States;
Or, To Major General John T. Smith,
Commander in Chief of the Army of the
United States; Or,
To the General in Command of the Army of
the United States.

In the Navy, all officers below the rank of
Commander are addressed as "Mr."

Archbishops should be addressed "Most
Reverend John Smith;" and Roman Catholics
as "The Most Reverend." Bishops should be
addressed "Right Reverend" and "Dear Sir,"
except that a Bishop in a Methodist church
prefers the simple title of "Reverend."

In the Roman Catholic Church, except for
the Archbishops and Bishops, it is in good taste
to say "Venerable Father" or "Venerable
Sir." Protestant Ministers should be formally
addressed "Rev. John Smith, D. D., Dear Dr.
Smith." If a clergyman does not hold the de-
gree of "D. D.," he may be addressed "Dear
Sir."

The Pope must be addressed as "His Holi-
ness, The Pope," or "To Our Most Holy
Father, Pope Leo the XIII."

The correct form of addressing a Cardinal is
"His Eminence, Cardinal ——," or "To His
Eminence, the Most Reverend ——."

Jewish Rabbis, in this country, as a rule, are
addressed as "Reverend."

PROPER ENVELOPES

THERE are two sizes of regular commercial envelopes in common use. One is $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches from right to left by $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches from top to bottom; and the other is $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches from right to left by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches from top to bottom.

Comparatively few business houses use, for their ordinary correspondence, envelopes larger than the former, or smaller than the latter. Sizes of material difference are not to be recommended.

Social envelopes are of many sizes, some of them measuring about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches from right to left by $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches from top to bottom.

Regular commercial sizes are in good taste for social correspondence; but, as a rule, they should be made of a higher grade of paper, which should be thicker than the stock used for business purposes.

Thin envelopes, unless made of bond paper, should not be used, as they are not strong enough to go through the mail.

Envelopes measuring more than $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches from right to left, and more than $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches

from top to bottom, are not likely to go through the mail without either the top or bottom or one of the sides being jammed or bent. Consequently, a social envelope not measuring more than the larger size of the commercial envelopes I have mentioned, is to be recommended.

This folding or jamming of envelopes in the mail is due to the method of handling and transmission. The post-office clerk distributes the envelopes in pigeonholes, which will not conveniently hold envelopes of dimensions much larger than $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. If the envelope is of a larger size, the distributor may not put it in the pigeonhole, because it will not lie flat. He is apt to place it on the table, and pick it up after the pigeonhole is full, or the mail is distributed, occasionally causing a delay in transmission.

Mail is tied up in bundles of suitable size for handling, and if the envelope is larger than the regular size, the top, bottom, or sides will be bent over in the tying, and the letter delivered in a jammed or imperfect condition.

Envelopes of more than ordinary size are frequently delayed in transmission, because they do not fit into the regular bundles, and may not leave the post-office on the same mail which carries those of regular size.

Experiments made by the writer prove that envelopes of ordinary size are seldom delayed

38 *The Art of Letter Writing*

in the mail, while those of oversize not infrequently reach the receiver on a subsequent mail. If it is desirable that your letter be delivered at the earliest possible moment, use an envelope of ordinary size.

Envelopes smaller than 5 by 3 inches are not to be recommended, either for business or social correspondence. They may be lost, although that is not likely to occur; but they may slip out of the packages, and their delivery be delayed. They are very annoying to distributing clerks and letter carriers, and both commercially and socially I consider them in bad taste. If you are sending out birth or other cards, which require a small envelope, better enclose the small envelope or card in an envelope of regular size.

While envelopes of more than ordinary size may not be delayed in transmission, mail in sealed envelopes of extraordinary size, like those used in sending out catalogues, is very apt to be placed with the newspaper or package mail, and its arrival be considerably delayed. Under the law, it is entitled to first-class mail privileges and transmission, but as distributing clerks are busy, they are likely to consider a large envelope as unsealed, even though it be sealed, and throw it into the newspaper bag.

My investigation shows that a good proportion of sealed matter, contained in very large

envelopes, is delayed at least one delivery. If you cannot enclose first-class, or sealed, matter, in an envelope of ordinary size, take particular pains to give it the appearance of being sealed, which may be done by pasting several paper seals over the flap, or by the use of sealing wax. It is well to write boldly the words "Sealed matter," or "Letter enclosed," on the face of the envelope. This will facilitate its early delivery.

I have discussed envelope paper in the chapter headed "Letter Paper and Envelope Material."

LETTER PAPER AND ENVELOPE MATERIAL

THE letter paper and the envelope should be of the same color and of about the same material, although the envelope should be of thicker paper if very thin letter paper is used. The stock may vary slightly, if there is no conspicuous difference. For example, bond letter paper may be enclosed in an envelope made of heavier stock, which is not bond, provided the colors match.

As a rule, the social envelope and paper should be of the same weight, and, of course, alike in color and quality.

There is no fixed rule governing the color of letter paper or envelopes, either for business or social correspondence; but white for commercial use, and white or cream for social correspondence, are always in good taste.

Many business houses and social writers prefer a light blue or yellow, and some of them use pink and other colors; but any color, except white, light blue, light yellow, or light orange, should not be used commercially. Deep, dark

colors are in bad form for social correspondence, and the writing upon them is difficult to read. White, cream, pale gray or tan, or light blue, is in good taste.

Highly colored paper should not be used either in business or socially.

Thin paper, if of bond stock, which is tough and strong, is all right for commercial correspondence, particularly when the typewriter is used, and the writing appears only on one side of the sheet. But thin paper is objectionable for social correspondence, if the writer persists in writing upon both sides of the sheet.

Bond paper costs six and one half cents and upwards per pound, and is to be given preference over all other stocks, for every class of correspondence, as it is strong and its surface is admirably adapted to both the typewriter and the pen.

There are stocks, other than bond, which may be used for correspondence, such as what is technically known as "S & C" (size and calender). This paper has a good surface for both the typewriter and the pen, but it is not as strong as bond, and is likely to tear in the typewriter.

When in doubt, use bond.

Do not accept any paper until you have tried it with the pen, and with the typewriter, if you have one. The surface of paper varies materi-

42 *The Art of Letter Writing*

ally, and many a paper, which looks well, is not easy to write upon. Then, some thin papers are more opaque than are those of greater thickness.

On account of the increased postage, much of the foreign correspondence is written upon thin paper, either on one side or upon both sides if paper is very opaque. But paper of this thinness is not considered in good taste for domestic correspondence.

TRANSPARENT ENVELOPES

MANY business houses are using transparent envelopes, which allow the name and address on the letter or billhead to show through.

It is, of course, necessary, when using this envelope, to have the name and address properly located upon the letter or billhead, so that the whole of it will appear. There is no real objection to the use of these envelopes for business houses, as they are supposed to, or do, save time. But personally, I am of the opinion that the ordinary envelope is better.

It is obvious that the transparent envelope either must be very thin or else the transparency part must be pasted in, and pasting in is objectionable.

Envelopes should be thick enough to carry the letter through the mail without damage. For this reason, I recommend ordinary envelopes, which are fairly thick, in preference to the transparent kind.

Transparent envelopes should never be used for social correspondence.

LETTER - HEADS

EVERY man in business, without exception, should have a letter-head, upon which is printed at least his name and address, and his business should be added. If he is, for example, a grocer, upon his letter-head should appear not less than the following words:

John W. Smith
Grocer
406 Main Street
Portland, Maine

There is no rule for the size of type to be used, or for the amount of material to be printed, or for its position on the letter-head; except that it should be in the left-hand upper corner, or in the center, or should occupy the entire top of the letter sheet.

The business man should avoid placing too much matter upon his letter-head, as it is likely to confuse the reader and injures the appearance.

There is no necessity of printing upon the

letter-head everything you sell. The mere statement of what your business is, with the addition of specialties, is sufficient. For example, if you are a grocer, the term "Grocer" covers your business, and there is no need of adding "Fine teas and coffees," or any other line of regular goods, which it is obvious you carry in stock.

But if you happen to be the agent of some particular brand, like "Star Flour," then you can add the line, "Agents for Star Flour."

If your firm name is a company, like "John W. Smith & Company" or "Smith Manufacturing Company," it is well to print, in small type, near the upper margin, or at the extreme left or right, the names of your officers or partners.

The following are good forms of letter-heads for corporations:

John W. White, Pres.

George White, Treas.

The White Iron Company

Manufacturers of

Structural Hardware

Chicago, Ill.

46 *The Art of Letter Writing*

George T. Black, *Pres.*
William R. Mead, *Sec.*
John M. Jones, *Treas.*

The Starro
Coal-Saver

George T. Black Company

Manufacturers of Stoves

148 Main Street

OMAHA, NEB.,

The following are acceptable forms of letter-heads for partnership concerns:

Fred. K. Small

Geo. M. Smith

Edward T. White

Small & Smith
Fit-to-Wear Clothiers
708 Portland Square

Chicago, Illinois,

William M. Snow
George W. Raine

Long-Wear
Silverware

Snow & Company

Silversmiths

462 Fourth Avenue

New York City

Where the business is divided into departments, it is well to print on the letter-head, and some times in another color of ink, lines like,

Export Department

John T. Smith, Manager

Sales Department

William W. Johnson, Manager

Credit Department

John H. Clark, Manager

The name of the manager may be omitted.

I present several forms of corner or center letter-heads:

Snow & Company

COAL

46 Ninth Avenue
Boston, Mass.

Snow & Raine

ICE

20 Main Street
Rome, N. Y.

48 *The Art of Letter Writing*

STEEL-CLAD MFG. CO.
KITCHEN WARE
6 MAIN STREET
BOSTON

William T. Black
Flour
22 Wheat Exchange Building
Boston, Mass.

John W. Smith & Co.
406 Green Street
Portland, Me.

William W. Warren
Warren, Wis.

Frank G. Pope

George Y. Pope

Pope and Pope
Accountants
Main St., Boston

Boston Iron Works

Heavy Castings

1720 Beacon St.

Galveston, Tex.

The following forms of professional and social letter-heads are to be recommended. They may be printed on the upper left or upper center of the sheet:

Walter W. Warren, M.D.

64 Main Street

Rome, N.Y.

OFFICE HOURS: 2 TO 3, 7 TO 8

Marshall M. Monroe, M.D.

76 Main Street

Montreal, Quebec

OFFICE HOURS: 3 to 4, 7 to 8

Rev. Wm. W. White, D.D.

Pastor, First Baptist Church

Philadelphia, Pa.

Residence, 84 Third Avenue

William M. Hubbard

Attorney-at-Law

76 Tremont Building

Toronto, Ont.

Wallace W. Williams

Lawyer

6 Main Street, St. Louis, Mo.

George W. Crawford

Department of Economics

University of Minnesota

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Oliver O. Ordway, M.D.

86 Water Street

Chicago, Ill.

Office Hours: 1 to 2, 6 to 7

Mary W. Maynard

No. 60 White Street

Boston, Mass.

Florence F. Freeman

Stenographer

Room 16, 5 Main St.

New York City

Ethel P. Hunter

"THE ELMS"

Ottawa, Ontario

Some business houses print, on their letter-heads, an expression like, "All correspondence should be addressed to the firm (or house or company) and not to individuals." There is no objection to this, but it seems to be superfluous, for many writers assume the right to address the letter as they choose, and prefer to send it to an individual, and not to the firm, particularly if they are acquainted with the party, and they would not take kindly to the demand that they address everything to the firm.

The writer will do as he pleases. The business house has no right to dictate to him, unless the receiver of the letter is connected with the company.

Every manager or official should have it understood that all letters to him, unless marked "Personal" or "Private," may be opened by his partners, or by responsible officers, or by the head-clerk.

If you have a telephone, it is well to print the word, "Telephone," on your letter-head, but it is generally inadvisable to give the number, as it may change. If you use a cable address, give your cable code name and address on your letter-head.

While I am not entirely opposed to the use of artistic and ornamental letters or lettering, I would strongly advise the use of only plain

52 *The Art of Letter Writing*

type or lettering. If ornamental lettering is preferred, care should be taken to use only type which that particular style of lettering is adapted to. But under no circumstances use fancy lettering for the firm name, business, or address.

Many faces of modern type are illegible, and the receiver may not be sure as to the exact spelling of the firm's name, especially of the initials.

Do not have more than a few styles of type or lettering, especially on the letter-head. Better have only one, and, of course, type of different sizes.

There are four forms of letter-head printing: First, from type; secondly, from the copper or steel plate; thirdly, from stone or what is known as lithography; fourthly, from a sketch by an artist, which may be reproduced on the common printing press, or by engraving on copper or steel, or by lithography.

The most economical form, so far as cost is concerned, of letter-head printing, is that from type, and printed upon an ordinary printing press.

If your printer does not carry the right faces of type, you can have the letter-head set by some expert typographer, and an electrotype furnished you, which any printer can handle. This is to be advised, because with this electro-

type on hand, you can give subsequent orders for letter-heads, without the additional expense for setting.

The copper or steel engraved letter-head is always in good taste, and has a richness which cannot be produced in any other way, but the cost of the production is very much greater, as steel or copper engraving has to be done by hand, and only a few hundred an hour can be printed, while several times this number can be run on a printing press. If you use this class of engraving, avoid script, as a rule, as it is hard to read.

The first printings from a copper plate are practically identical with that of the steel plate, but if you are going to use a large number of letter-heads, the steel plate is cheaper in the end, because it will wear much longer.

Lithography, or stone-work, is much more expensive than that of the ordinary letterpress, unless you have a large number printed at the same time, when the cost is not much higher. This class resembles steel and copper engraving, and is richer and more artistic than is possible to obtain by the work of the printing press. It gives your letter-head a distinction which is not procurable from type.

Embossing is similar to the result obtained from the steel plate, except that the letters are slightly raised, and the distinctiveness is much

54 . *The Art of Letter Writing*

enhanced therefrom. It is expensive, but is to be recommended by those who can afford it. Script, or fancy letters, should never be embossed. Better use a plain and very legible style of lettering. The quality of this work does not need embellishment; the plainer it is, the better.

If you have a trade-mark, there is no objection to having it appear on the letter-head, preferably in some other color of ink.

Comparatively few women and professional men, unless they be lawyers, doctors, or clergymen, used printed letter-heads, but, fortunately, the custom is changing, and the printed letter-head is permissible under all social conditions. It is to be advised, because it prevents mistakes and complications.

The lawyer, doctor, or clergyman may use the ordinary printed letter-head, or one engraved or embossed, or done by lithography; but he should avoid the use of large type or lettering; and should have, as a rule, the printed matter placed in the upper left-hand corner, or else occupy a small space in the center. It should not extend clear across the letter sheet, except in the case of lawyers, and then only when there is a firm of lawyers. Even then, it is better to confine the printing to small space. As on business letter-heads, no form of lettering should be used which is not legible.

Many social writers, especially women, prefer an initial or monogram. This is in good taste, but has no value, except for decoration. It stands for nothing. There is no objection to using a monogram in connection with the printing of name and address.

The custom of printing the street address, at the top of a social letter sheet, is becoming common. This is to be encouraged, but I see no reason why the name should not accompany the street address; and there appears to be every reason why the town and state should be added.

The object of all letters, both business and social, is to deliver a message, with or without the suggestion of a reply. This being the case, it is obvious that the writer should not make it difficult for the receiver to answer his written communications.

Unless one is familiar with the writer's name and address, he may be unable to reply with a certainty of his letter being received, due to carelessness of writing and to the absence of address. If the name and address are not printed upon the letter-head, complications are likely to arise. Better sacrifice the Mrs. Grundy principles of social etiquette, than make it difficult for the one writing you to answer your letter.

A signature and written address are of little use, if the receiver is not able readily to read

56 *The Art of Letter Writing*

the handwriting. Better take no chance; and the only way to avoid complications is never to use a letter sheet, except when writing a friend, which does not have upon it, plainly printed, your name and address.

A very inexpensive, and yet neat and artistic form of social letter paper, can be procured by ordering a light blue paper with your name and address printed in a blue ink much darker than that of the paper. The two colors being alike, yet of different density, will produce a harmonious result.

NAMES AND ADDRESSES ON ENVELOPES

THE name and address of the sender of every kind of a letter, both business and social, should be written or printed upon the envelope.

There is absolutely no excuse, and no reason, for not doing so.

Unless the name and address appear upon the envelope, the letter may miscarry, and will then go to the dead-letter office, causing a delay of several months.

If the name and address are given, the Post Office Department will return the letter to the sender, if it is unable to locate the party to whom it is addressed. Further, if the writer forgets to affix a postage stamp, or it drops off, the letter will be returned to him; otherwise, the party addressed will receive a notice, and be obliged to forward postage to obtain the letter.

Probably nine-tenths of social letters are mailed without the name and address appearing upon the envelope, and many letters go astray or are not delivered. There is no social or ethical rule which suggests this omission.

If you do not carry envelopes with your name and address upon them, write your name and address in the upper left-hand corner of the address side of the envelope, or upon the back, — preferably upon the address side.

If you object to printing your name upon a social envelope, you may use your initials, provided you follow them with a sufficient address. There is no objection to writing matter something as follows upon the envelope:

E. G. T.
No. 74 Green Street
Omaha, Neb.

Nothing, however, is to be gained by so doing. Better write your name out in full. But initials and monograms should never be used without the addition of your name, if you are located in an office building, or in an apartment house where many families reside.

The writing of your name, as well as your address, gives you double security, for the envelope may be blurred in the mail, and either your name or your address, or a part of them, may not be legible. If both appear, you have every reason to expect the return of your letter, if the party addressed cannot be located.

A few writers place the name and address in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope. This is to be avoided, as it is likely to confuse the

post office clerks, for this space is frequently used for the address of the receiver.

If the name and address appear on the back of the envelope, they should be written or printed directly above or below the flap.

The Post Office Department will print the name and address in the upper left-hand corner of the address side of stamped envelopes of any denomination of two or more cents, but will use only a small and uniform style of type, and limits the matter to four lines. The first line reads, "After —— days return to."

The Department will print any number of days, from three to 30 inclusive. It is useless to write or print, "Return in one or two days," because the post office holds the letter at least three days.

If the number of days from three to 30 is designated, the Department will hold the letter for the time specified, and then return it to the sender. If the number of days is not given, it will be held 30 days. If the name and address of the sender is not given on the envelope, the Department holds it 30 days, then advertises it, and in about two weeks sends it to the Dead-Letter Office, where it may remain several weeks.

The tendency to print the name and address, with or without the business, in large type, is to be discouraged. An envelope is not a good

advertising medium, and there is no business, or other, excuse for covering the face or back of the envelope with advertising matter.

Many concerns prefer to print their name and address upon the envelope, instead of allowing it to be done by the Government. Of course, this entails additional expense, as the Government charges only a few cents a thousand for doing this work. It is obvious, however, that a Government-printed envelope has no individuality, and it is sometimes advisable to send out an envelope very artistically printed, but large type should not be used. Every letter should be plain, distinct, and legible. When in doubt, use Roman or some face resembling Roman.

I present several styles of composition, all of which are neat, consequently they are artistic.

I have omitted from some of the examples the line, "After —— days return to," as this is optional with the sender, but it can be added without affecting the appearance.

For the upper left-hand corner, on the address side of a business envelope:

Wallace W. Smith
608 White Ave.
Boston, Mass.

Smith Manufacturing Co.

1080 Washington St.

New York City

Return in five days to

Smith & Jones

8 North St., Chicago, Ill.

The White Car Co.

Portland, Maine

Washington Mills

Rome, N. Y.

White, Brown & Black

Boston, Mass.

White & White Co.

600 Main Street

Boston, Mass.

For professional or social envelopes:

John T. Smith, M.D.

No. 109 Third Ave.

Rome, N. Y.

Return in six days to

George R. Whitehead

70 East Street

Rome, N. Y.

62 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Florence T. Worthington

75 Western Avenue

Boston, Mass.

C. W. R., 100 White St., Malden, Ohio

Walter W. Warren, 16 Warren Ave., Warren, Iowa

There is no need of using the word "From," as the printed or written matter is self-explanatory.

Ends of lines do not require punctuation marks, unless they are abbreviations, when they should be followed with a period.

It is optional whether or not "Street" and "Avenue" are spelled out. The best rule to follow is to spell them out, if there is room; otherwise, to abbreviate them; but "Place" and "Road" should be spelled out.

The number of the street, like "100 White Street," may be preceded by "No." It is bad form to spell it out, although this is sometimes done on social envelopes, letter paper, and invitations. It shows affectation and a desire to be different without reason.

Under no circumstances should the street number be spelled out. Write or print it "100 White Street," and not "One Hundred White Street."

ADDRESSING AN ENVELOPE

ADDRESSES upon envelopes, and all packages to be delivered by mail, should be plainly written, preferably with a typewriter. The number and name of the street should always appear, if the party addressed does not live in a small town. The names of the city or town, and the state, should be clear, and admit of no misconstruction.

Under no circumstances should the name of the city or town be abbreviated, but there is no objection to using abbreviations for states, in which case they should be more carefully written than if the name of the state is spelled out.

The name of the party addressed should be preceded by "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Miss," "Dr.," "Rev.," "Col.," or other title. "Esq." may be used instead of "Mr.," but the latter form is preferable.

There is no objection to writing "Messrs." before a company or firm name, but it is not necessary.

The street address may be written in the

64 *The Art of Letter Writing*

lower left-hand corner, but it is better to write it as it appears in the following form:

Mr. John W. Smith,
44 Crescent Street,
Boston,
Mass.

When letters are addressed to parties having offices in large buildings, the room number may be given, and should appear if the letter is addressed to an individual whose name is not painted upon the door or bulletin board in the hall. It is safer, however, to address one in care of the firm of which he is a member, unless his name is a part of the firm name; like

Mr. Henry T. Smith,
Care of George M. Jones & Company,
46 Beacon Street,
Portland, Maine.

Some time ago the following form began to be used:

Boston, Mass.,
John T. Smith & Company,
00 Beacon Street.

The use of the foregoing form is not to be recommended, as it is better to follow conven-

tional styles and usage, and not to confuse the distributing clerks in the post office, or the letter carriers.

The placing of the post-office box number on the envelope is optional. Your box number, if you have one, is not likely to be known to your correspondents; but there is no objection to printing it upon printed return envelopes, in which case, I would advise the appearance also of the street and number.

The writing of the word "City" on an envelope, when it is sent to an address in the same city, is unsafe. Letters occasionally are placed in the wrong mail-bag, and the letter mailed by one, say, from Boston, to another person in the same city, with "City" written on the envelope, may, by accident, be sent to another city, in which case the receiving post office cannot forward it to the proper place, unless the cancellation mark is clear, which may not occur.

Care should be taken to begin the address on the envelope not much above the center of the envelope. If it appears too near the top, the cancellation mark may obliterate it.

CARE IN ADDRESSING

UNLESS you are sure of the address of the party written to, look it up. If you cannot find it, then write upon the envelope information which will aid the Post Office Department. For example: let us suppose that you wish to write to Mr. John W. Smith, who does business, and lives, in New York City, and cannot locate his street address. Then write upon the envelope something as follows:

Mr. John W. Smith,
Real Estate Agent,
New York City.

Or, write in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope,

“Probably on West 22nd St. or West 23d St.”

If the party addressed lives in a large city, and his name is not uncommon, the chances are there are from one dozen to several hundred

residents of that place bearing the same name. A friend of mine moved to New York several years ago, and he bore an ordinary name. Upon investigation he found in the New York directory 462 men living under a name the same as his or very similar to it.

You cannot be over-careful in addressing an envelope or package.

STAMPING ENVELOPES

ALL envelopes should be carefully stamped, unless they are stamped envelopes. If you are sending out many at the same time, not only stamp them carefully, but look at each one before mailing it. If the stamp falls off, and many of them do, the letter will be delayed.

If your name and address is upon the envelope, it will be returned to you promptly. But if your address does not appear, the post office will notify the receiver, and he cannot obtain the letter until he forwards the postage.

I advise all business men to use the stamped envelopes for ordinary purposes, whether or not their addresses are printed by the Government.

If an envelope is spoiled in addressing, the Government will return the full value of the stamp printed upon it.

As the Government does not manufacture stamped envelopes of high grade, it is obvious that the user of an expensive envelope, either for business or social correspondence, must procure them elsewhere, and affix postage stamps to them.

SUFFICIENT POSTAGE

BE careful to attach a sufficient number of stamps to every envelope containing either a letter or printed matter, or both. If you do not, your mail will be delayed, and the receiver will have to pay additional postage, — a small sum, it is true, but most receivers object to being obliged to pay anything for a letter.

Every business man should have a correct postal scale, in the absence of which, he should carry letters to the post office to be weighed, except where he is sure there is no overweight. Do not depend upon cheap postal scales sold at the stores; better have a good one, or none at all.

Unpaid, or underpaid, mail matter, other than first-class or sealed matter, will not be forwarded. It will be returned to the sender, if his address is upon it; if not the party addressed will be notified to forward the necessary postage.

ENCLOSING STAMP FOR REPLY

POSTAGE stamps, or stamped envelopes with the address printed on them, should not be enclosed with ordinary business letters, as it is obvious that the receiver is sufficiently interested to reply at his own expense. Nor need stamps be enclosed with social letters, addressed to personal friends, although there is no objection to so doing.

If the reply, however, is wholly in the interest of the writer, and is of no benefit to the receiver, stamps, or stamped envelopes, should be enclosed with both business and social letters.

Stamps should never be sent to any department of the United States Government, or to a Member of Congress, when the matter written about is official; because United States Government officials and Congressmen may mail matter concerning their departments free of postage.

The use of an unstamped return envelope is advisable when you are addressing a person who may not correctly write your name and address, but it is not necessary when addressing a business house.

THE SPACE BETWEEN THE LINES OF A LETTER

THE typewritten letter should never be single-spaced, if the length of the lines exceed three inches. The usual length of the typewritten line is between six and six and one-half inches.

Single spacing makes the letter difficult to read, and materially lessens its effect upon the receiver.

Double spacing is preferable in all cases, but necessary where the lines are long.

Newspaper men, and other writers, frequently resort to three, or to even four, spaces between the lines, but I would not advise more than two spaces in an ordinary letter.

Hand-written letters should not be closely written. There should be about as much space between the lines as appears in a properly spaced typewritten letter.

Do not run your words together in hand-written letters; have a readable space between each word; better have too much space than too little.

72 *The Art of Letter Writing*

If you use what is known as the vertical style of writing, where letters are of greater height or depth, be careful not to run your "l's," or "y's," or other letters into those preceding them or following them.

While too much space is not to be recommended, it is better to err in this direction than to crowd your lines and words together.

BUSINESS LETTERS

As the writing of these letters has been considered in detail in several of the chapters of this book, it is unnecessary to comment at length upon them here; except that it may be said, that business letters, even though written by a concern consisting of only one man, are impersonal, and should represent the business, not the individuality, of the writer.

The business letter may be cordial, but it must at all times be businesslike and somewhat formal, and, unless the writer is addressing a personal friend, it should contain no personalities or anything not pertinent to the subject considered.

SOCIAL LETTERS

THE writer of a social letter has a license to say whatever he chooses, and its contents should be representative of his personality. It should be intimate and cordial, and may contain pleasantries, or anything else, which the writer of it thinks would interest its receiver.

Social letters are treated in detail in several chapters.

CIRCULAR OR DUPLICATE LETTERS

THE superabundance of circular letters used by business houses, and the common practice of having them set in type, more or less in imitation of typewritten matter, have depreciated the value of any attempt to deceive the public into believing that they are personally written and are not mere circulars.

A letter of two or more pages, even if individually written, may be considered a circular letter by the receiver, unless it is in answer to an inquiry by him. Consequently, I would caution the business house against more than a limited use of so-called facsimile typewritten letters. Roman type is much easier to read, and in many cases it is more effective to enclose a neatly printed circular than to attempt to force the reader to peruse a long letter. But I am decidedly of the opinion that it is better, in most cases, to send a personally written short letter with every circular, if it is addressed to others than those connected with the concern.

Of course, there is no objection to a circular letter of any size containing descriptions and

76 *The Art of Letter Writing*

instructions, if it is sent to employees or others connected with the house. I am referring wholly to letters sent to customers, or to prospective customers.

It is obvious that a few words inside of the receiver are worth a thousand words outside of him. What he will read, not what you send him, counts.

In these days, when advertising is epidemic, the average receiver is so saturated with advertising matter that he is likely to throw into the waste basket, unread, everything he receives, unless his attention is called to it in a personal way, or the matter particularly interests him.

Circular letters, then, should be extremely brief, and, as a rule, make but one point. It is far better not to employ the duplicating systems, except in exceptional cases and when sending communications to employees, and to address the letter individually to the customer, enclosing brief and attractive printed matter, and, as a rule, not more than one piece with a letter.

All letters of solicitation should get right down to business. There is absolutely no reason why they should be literary productions, nor should they be handicapped by flowery or blind introductions. What reads well to the sender, because he is interested in it, may not appeal to the receiver. The story should be told in the fewest words, and some particular point should

be made, to be followed with other letters, each one covering some other strong advantage.

More than half of the money expended for circular letters, and for the accompanying printed matter is lost, because of the length of the letters, and because too much circular matter is enclosed.

There are, on the market, several machines, known by various names, which are advertised to produce facsimiles of typewritten letters, the name and address of the receiver to be filled in with a typewriter of the face of type and the color of ink corresponding to that of the letter.

Comparatively few of these letters pass muster.

So many of them are sent 'out, that the receiver, if a business man, is likely immediately to recognize them for what they are, and he may treat them as he would a printed circular.

Unless this work is perfectly done, so that the duplication is not discernible, they are no better than printed circulars.

It is difficult to produce them, even by the best processes, because the ribbon on the typewriter is not likely to maintain the same color as that of the letter itself for more than a limited number of impressions, and the name and address, although they resemble the body of the letter, may not do so sufficiently to prevent the suspicion that they are circular letters.

78 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Some years ago, I conceived a scheme for so-called circular letters, particularly for those so long that they would not justify the expense of being individually written, which has proved a pronounced success.

Instead of sending out a long circular letter in imitation of typewriting, it is better, I believe, to address each party separately in a short letter, the whole letter, including the name and address, to be written on the typewriter, the body of the letter briefly referring to an enclosure, or to something pasted upon, or in any other way attached to, the letter itself.

Let us suppose, for example, that you desire to send out a number of letters about a new hot-water heater, which you are making. Address to each party a letter written somewhat as follows:

Boston, Mass., Jan. 3, 1913.

Mr. John T. Smith,
Portland, Maine.

Dear Sir:

We would specially call your attention to the appended (or enclosed) description of our new Star Heater, particularly adapted to residences.

Respectfully yours,
The Jones Manufacturing Co.,
By John T. Smith, President.

The Art of Letter Writing 79

“By” may be omitted, but had better be used.

Enclose in the letter a brief description of the heater, or enclose one or more imitations of typewritten pages, or paste or fasten to the upper left-hand corner of the letter, a short printed description in the form of a proof.

If the receiver is interested, he will read what you send him. He is assured that you consider him of sufficient importance to send him a personally written letter. The attaching of the proof is both novel and attractive.

The enclosing of a long circular is not so likely to command attention.

I suggest that in some cases it would be well to enclose a proof of the full announcement or descriptive catalogue, if not too large. Mention in your letter that you enclose an advance proof of the catalogue about to be issued.

It would be well for you to place in the envelope reproductions of photographs of your heater, with brief printed descriptions.

I would further suggest, that you enclose a postal card, with your name and address printed upon the face of it, and on the other side, printed matter as follows:

Kindly mail me your catalogue.

Name

Address

I further suggest, that upon this postal card be blanks for information, for the writer to fill out, stating whether or not his residence is new, or is to be built, with space for the number of rooms and other particulars.

The receiver is likely to give this information, and the receipt of his reply enables you to write him personally and to give approximate prices, etc.

Business houses should avoid the placing of too much printed matter in an envelope, if a letter is enclosed. Better send brief descriptions with the letter, and make it easy for the receiver to ask for more information.

Upon general principles, I would advise the sending of a personally written letter to all parties to whom you send catalogues, whether the catalogue is enclosed with the letter or sent separately.

When sending catalogues, or other printed matter, under another cover, and to parties at a distance, I suggest that the catalogues be mailed a few hours before the letters are, so that they will reach the receivers at about the same time. If mailed together, the letters are likely to reach the receivers several hours, or even a day or days, before the catalogues are received. On catalogue envelope print "See accompanying letter."

FOLLOW - UP LETTERS

ALTHOUGH a proportion, and, perhaps, a large one, of letters sent out, do not receive the attention they deserve, and are either filed after a clerk has read them, or thrown into the waste basket, the system of follow-up letters has been generally profitable.

I know of concerns who send out as many as 25 follow-up letters.

Before beginning to send out follow-up letters, establish a card, or other index, and keep a record of everything you send out, and of replies received. Divide this index into sections, known as A. B. C., etc., and record on each card, the date, and the number referring to the form sent.

Follow-up letters should vary in size, and each one should make a special point; better one point than several. Each follow-up letter should invite correspondence, either by using such expressions as "May we not send you full particulars?" Or, "When are you likely to be in the market?" Or, "Is there anything special you would like to know?"

82 *The Art of Letter Writing*

The enclosing of a blank to be filled out, or a postal upon which leading questions are printed, with blank spaces for answers, is to be recommended. Many a receiver will fill out and mail a postal card, when he might not take the time to write a letter of inquiry. Make it easy for him to reply.

If you enclose printed matter, it is well not always to use the same thing, even if you have nothing new to send. Reword it, and reprint it; make it look fresh.

I again wish to impress upon you, the trade-bringing value of confining practically all of your follow-up letters to the presentation of some special or seasonable point, which is more likely to appeal to the receiver than is a conglomeration or a full description. It is obvious that you may cover all of the points in the series of letters sent out.

There is no rule for the time which should elapse between the sending out of follow-up letters, but as much as a week should pass. Sometimes it is well to wait two or three weeks, or longer. Success, however, has been made by sending out a circular letter every day for a week or more, but this must be done with the greatest care, so as to not offend the receiver. In case you do this, each letter must be the extreme of brevity, and should not contain over 100 words; better half that number.

LETTERS OF SOLICITATION

EVERY business house, and practically every business man, sends out letters of solicitation, usually accompanied with printed matter, the printed matter being enclosed with the letter or sent under another cover.

Experts, representing every class of business, have labored for years to produce a form, or forms, of letters of solicitation, which are likely to receive the attention of their receivers; but no one has, as yet, produced anything which is more than moderately successful.

Business men, especially those of large firms, are extremely busy and do not have time to read more than important letters; and many heads of firms, and high officials, never see any letter or any piece of printed matter, until it has passed through a secretary or clerk. These assistants, obviously, do not bring to their employer's attention anything which they think he would not care to see; they often destroy or file correspondence, catalogues, and circulars, which it would be to their employer's interest to read.

84 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Consequently, it is extremely difficult to write, or print, anything which will reach personally the party to whom it is addressed.

Practically every supposable scheme has been tried, with more or less success, usually less.

Unique letter paper has been used, and the most novel forms of printing matter, but as there is so much of it sent out, originality, by comparison, has not the value it would have if the art of writing letters, and of producing printed matter, had not been carried to what would seem to be the extreme of possibility.

It is impossible to establish any rule, or to give any form of letters of solicitation, which could be guaranteed to succeed, with so many styles, forms, and schemes upon the market.

I would advise the sender of letters of solicitation to give preference to the utmost simplicity, providing it is comprehensive.

It does not pay, as a rule, to send out blind letters, — letters with only their originality or eccentricity to recommend them. No matter how wonderfully they may be prepared, they are of no value unless they are appreciated by the receiver.

The spending of money, especially for buying goods for trade purposes, is devoid of sentiment. It is cold-blooded business. The buyer wants to know what he is going to get, and whether or not it will pay him to get it. Therefore, plain,

clean-cut, statements of facts, with advantages tabulated so as to be grasped by the eye, as well as by the brain, are to be recommended.

The practice of a blind or literary introduction is not a good business form.

The following introduction to a letter is merely a platitude. The writer of it is simply telling the receiver what he and everybody else know:

What you want is something which will work, — do it effectively and quickly, and produce results.

Another objectionable form begins somewhat as follows:

Your customer is never satisfied except with the best. It does not pay to give him poor goods, or anything which will not please him in the end. Nothing is too good for the customer.

The foregoing is objectionable, because it stands for nothing, except that it is a self-evident truth, the correctness of which the receiver accepts without argument. It does not get down to business.

It is far better to start in a businesslike manner, with an absence of any clause or sentence,

86 *The Art of Letter Writing*

which, at best, is only filling. For example: if you are a manufacturer of a breakfast food, why not begin your letter something as follows?

We have made it easy for you to sell
Star Breakfast Food, because we spend
\$100,000 a year advertising it.

Or the letter may open as follows:

Every woman in America knows Star
Breakfast Food, because the advertise-
ment of it appears in 150 leading maga-
zines and newspapers.

Let us suppose, for example, that you are
making safety razors. A good way to begin a
letter is as follows:

The only reason that 75 per cent of
self-shavers do not use the Crescent
Safety Razor is because they do not
know about it. We are beginning an
advertising campaign which will cover
the entire country. Enclosed are sam-
ples of the advertisements which we are
sending out.

Another good way to start a letter is as fol-
lows:

We offer you a price on the Sunlight Lamp, which will enable you to handle it at an extra profit. Every lamp is guaranteed to give satisfaction, and you are authorized to return the money in every case, and without loss to you. We stand back of every lamp. You take no chances.

Letters of solicitation should be as brief as possible. If a short description would not suffice, then refer in your letter either to the enclosed or accompanying printed matter; or, better, use some expression like the following: "Please read marked paragraphs on enclosed circular (or in catalogue mailed)."

The marking of a paragraph, or paragraphs, attracts the attention of the reader, who may become interested in the marked paragraphs or section, and is likely to read further. Do everything you can to assist the reader in comprehending what you have to say.

It is obvious that certain buyers would be more impressed with some particular part of your descriptive matter, than with the catalogue, or circular, as a whole. Calling their attention to these particular parts is more likely to interest them than if you suggest they read your catalogue in its entirety.

Of course, you know the wants or demands

88 *The Art of Letter Writing*

of your trade, and it is not difficult for you to mark, or emphasize, certain parts of the description which are likely to appeal specifically to some one class of your customers.

Do not be afraid that they will refuse to read the whole if they are interested. Suggest to them the salient parts first, and they will pass on into fuller descriptions, if what you send them appeals to them.

Nothing facilitates sales more than anticipating the special wants and desires of a customer. Of course, intimate information is not always obtainable, but if you instruct your salesmen to question customers politely, and to learn about their characteristics, and likes and dislikes, you will be better able to write them, or send them, matter which will particularly appeal to them.

Let us suppose, for example, you are selling stoves. The same form of letter would not be suitable to all of the stove trade. Every section has its special requirements, and every retailer his own ideas. If you can ascertain, in advance, what is acceptable to both the retailer and to his trade, and adapt your letter and printed matter to those conditions, they will receive an attention, which probably will not be given to any set form sent out to the trade as a whole.

In writing letters of solicitation, attempt to repeat the name of the firm addressed, or the

town, in the body of the letter, so it will appear to be specially and personally written to that firm, and not a circular letter.

Make it look as though you had written this letter to no one else. Very slight changes in the text can be given to your stenographer, and the list to be sent to can be divided into sections, with slightly different forms to go to each.

It is far better to say, "We believe these stoves are especially adapted to Portland trade," than to omit the name of the city.

If you have sold a large number of stoves in Portland, it is well to use such an expression as, "During the last year, we have shipped 75 Star Stoves to Portland." This makes the letter personal and direct, and the appearance of a circular letter is avoided.

ORDERING GOODS

IN writing out an order for goods, unless you use the order blanks issued by the house you are addressing, specify each article by itself, using a different paragraph for each and every thing ordered. Do not write it out as follows:

“ Please send me 1 doz. half lb. packages Jones’ Cocoa; 3 doz. pint cans of Smith’s Baking Powder, and 1 gross Star Blueing.”

The following form is better:

Please send me (or please enter my order for), the following:

1 doz. half lb. packages of Jones’ Cocoa,

3 doz. pint bottles of Smith’s Baking Powder,

1 gross of Star Blueing.

At the bottom of the order, always specify when you desire to have the goods shipped, and

whether by mail, express, or freight. It is well to include the prices in your letter, so as to prevent misunderstanding; and further, to request that you be notified if the goods cannot be shipped as you have requested.

If you enclose check, somewhere in your letter say, "Check for \$400.00 enclosed." If you want them sent C. O. D., so specify.

All orders should be copied.

When a check is sent by mail, accompanied by a bill, there is no necessity of enclosing a letter stating that check is sent, but some firms prefer to do this, and it is certainly dignified and businesslike.

ENCLOSURES WITH LETTERS

WHENEVER you enclose anything in a letter, whether it be a copy of another letter or printed matter, mention it in the body of your letter, either in the beginning, or near the beginning, or at the close of the letter. If at the close, it may appear as the last paragraph in the body of the letter, or it may be written in the left-hand corner, below the signature. Use some expression like, "Catalogue enclosed" or "Specifications enclosed."

It is sometimes well to enclose in the letter copies of correspondence, although it is not necessary to do so. But if you enclose copies, be sure to retain copies. The enclosing of copies of correspondence may facilitate the reply, because the receiver will have before him all of the correspondence upon the subject and will not have to go to the trouble of searching the files.

The letter itself should be farthest from the address side of the envelope, — that is, nearest to the flap, because most letters are opened with the flap towards the receiver, and the letter itself

should be directly before him when he takes out the contents of the envelope.

Do not enclose with a letter, as a rule, more than one piece of printed matter. If you do, the receiver has the right to assume that everything sent him is circular matter.

It is frequently profitable to enclose, instead of a circular, or with a circular, photographs or reproductions of photographs, of the goods you sell. For example, let us suppose that you are especially pushing the sale of some machine. Enclose with your letter a photograph of the machine or a half-tone reproduction of it. It is well to print under the picture a brief explanation. If there is some particular part of the machine which is new, indicate it with an arrow pointing to the part, and, of course, with an explanation or description.

If the photograph or reproduction is a good one, and well illustrates the character of the machine, or any part of it, the receiver is likely at least to glance at it, and to give it an attention which might not occur if he had the full catalogue before him.

Of course, no one photograph or reproduction can take the place of the catalogue, but these pictures may be used to great advantage. Because of their isolation, they bring some particular point strongly before the receiver.

A series of photographs could be taken to

advantage, and one or more sent with each letter. But do not send illustrations of anything which cannot be properly portrayed in a picture. Unless a picture of a thing gives the receiver an intelligent idea of what it is, there is no use in sending it. Illustrations should illustrate, or not be used.

If it is advisable to send more than two or three pictures, it is well to place a piece of tape or band around them, or enclose them in a sort of paper portfolio. This scheme is to be highly recommended and will enable you to send more photographs than you could properly enclose loose in an envelope.

The half-tone process of engraving has become so extremely effective that any clear photograph can be reproduced at a very small expense, and the reproduction be nearly as good as the original. Everything depends upon the photograph itself. It should be taken by a competent photographer, and at an angle which will show the object to the best advantage. Further, the photographer should understand that he is working for a reproduction, that he may govern himself accordingly.

If, for any reason, it is difficult to get a good photograph, an artist can, with his pen, emphasize certain points upon the photograph itself, a reproduction to be made from the so-called "doctored" photograph. It is obvious,

however, that these changes or additions must be true to life, with no attempt to deceive; for deception, in this direction, will act like a boomerang to the sender.

Half-tone engravings should be printed upon what is known as coated paper, or some paper with a very hard and smooth surface.

A very artistic effect is produced by making a solid block of metal, about one eighth or more of an inch larger all around than the photograph, and with this block printing a light yellow tint, upon which the engraving itself is printed. This throws the picture into relief, and gives it a much more artistic appearance, in no way interfering with the illustration itself.

The business man cannot too fully realize the advantage of making but one strong point at a time in a letter of solicitation.

No letter, circular or otherwise, should contain a full description, if a long description is necessary for a full explanation, unless it is sent to employees. Full, technical descriptions belong to the catalogue.

The circular letter, or letter of solicitation, is merely a forerunner, or is a sort of written bait, cast into the waters of trade with the hope that somebody somewhere will either snap at it or swallow it.

If an attempt is made to cover the ground completely, the contents of the letter will spill

over, so to speak, and the greater part of its effectiveness will be lost.

Give the receiver only what he will read or take.

This applies to all advertising matter, and particularly to circular letters or letters of solicitation.

SENDING MONEY BY MAIL

MONEY, either bills or coins, should not be sent in other than registered letters. If coins are enclosed, they should be placed in a paste-board coin-holder. Otherwise, they are likely to force their way through the envelope.

Postal and express money-orders are inexpensive, and checks or drafts on New York City, or on other large cities, are easily procurable. Checks on banks located in small towns should not be sent to a distant place, as a fee may be charged for collection. All local banks issue drafts payable in the large cities.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE RECEIPT OF MONEY

COMMON custom does not require that a letter accompany a receipted bill, but the majority of first-class business houses, return the receipted bill with a letter acknowledging its payment, or use a neatly printed or engraved card, reading somewhat as follows:

We acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your esteemed remittance.

LETTERS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

LETTERS directed to residents abroad, who are not Americans, need not materially differ in form from those written to those living, or doing business, in this country, — except that rather more care should be taken with them, and the writer should avoid using any English idiom, or current phrase, which, although well understood by Americans, might not be comprehended abroad.

Then, letters to foreign countries should be even more explicit and of the greatest simplicity. They may be written in English, or translated; but in translating, the changing of English into another language should be done by one not only familiar with English, but equally so with the language into which he is to translate the letter.

As a rule, one speaking the English language, no matter how well educated in foreign languages, is not likely to be able to translate English so that it will be understood by the foreigner, unless he has lived long enough abroad to think, as well as to write, in a tongue other than his native one.

100 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Many a writer is conceited enough to believe that his knowledge of a foreign language is sufficient to justify him in translating English into another tongue. It is better, and safer, to employ a professional translator, and particularly one versed in technical and business phraseology.

Thousands of letters have been sent abroad to the injury of their writers, simply because they were not properly translated.

Unless you are sure that you can translate, get some one to do it for you; or else send your letters in English, to be translated by the receivers.

Business houses in English-speaking countries, other than the United States, invariably precede a company, or firm, name with "Messrs." They are rather more formal in closing, and use such expressions as "I am, Your most obedient servant," or "Your most obedient servant," or "I am, with respect, Obediently yours."

There is, however, no objection to preserving the regular American style, instead of attempting to copy that of other countries, for "being yourself" is to be preferred.

COPYING LETTERS

EVERY business letter, whether of importance or not, should be copied, either by making a carbon of it, or by running it through a copying press.

It is obvious that a proportion of letters are of no particular consequence, but unless you establish a rule of copying everything, an important letter is likely to go out without any record being made of it.

The best method of copying is to use carbons; that is, insert a carbon sheet between your letter paper and the blank sheet which is to serve as copy. But copies cannot be made this way of letters written with other than the typewriter, pencil, or indelible pencil.

Pen writing will not produce a carbon copy.

Letters may be copied by the moistening process and the use of a copying press, provided you write with copying ink or have a copying ribbon in the typewriter.

So-called record typewriter ribbons and ordinary ink will not copy.

The carbon process is preferable, because it

102 *The Art of Letter Writing*

saves time, and because it does not blur the letter. It is practically impossible to copy a letter by the moistening process without blurring it.

Social letters, as a rule, need not be copied, and as most of them are written with a pen, it is difficult to do so without the letter showing that it has been copied. If a social letter is of importance, write out a duplicate of it.

LETTERS OF APPLICATION FOR A POSITION

ACCURATE statistics are impossible, but observation indicates that fully one half of all positions or jobs, other than those of the lowest grade, are obtained wholly, or in part, by written application.

Some employers require a letter of application even from those who apply personally for a position.

For my clients, and for myself, also, but largely for others, I have received many thousands of applications by mail; and these experiences appear to substantiate the opinion that less than five per cent of men and women in business, or out of work, have little conception of what constitutes a proper form of letter of application.

Most of the letters of application are stilted in style, altogether too conventional, and not one writer in ten properly describes himself, tells what he has done, and what he thinks he can do.

An advertisement in the "Help Wanted" columns of a newspaper brings in from a dozen to even several thousand replies. The reader

104 *The Art of Letter Writing*

of these letters, — the employer himself, or one of his assistants, — naturally turns down those which do not instantly appeal to him, and requests the presence of only those who have written something different from the expressions used by the rank and file.

Take a thousand letters of application, for example, and more than nine hundred of them are either faultily expressed, or are so similar to the others, that it is difficult for the receiver to make a choice.

While all erratic and overoriginal expressions should be avoided, and while one should get down to business in the simplest possible way, it is obvious that effort should be made to present one's self in other than the stilted and conventional form of the usual letter of application.

The applicant must consider himself as a commodity, — both his ability and his experience being for sale, — and, therefore, he should write about himself as he would of any line of goods for which he wants to find a purchaser.

He has two distinct points to make: first, what he has actually accomplished; and, secondly, what he thinks he can accomplish if given an opportunity. These are his assets, — his stock in trade, — and he should present them as he would any material goods which he may have for sale.

I do not propose to present definite rules, be-

cause there are none; but instead I will make a few suggestions.

1. Be as brief as is consistent with making a full presentation of your qualifications.

2. Brevity is to be commended, but it is more profitable to use too many words than to sacrifice any part of what you should tell about yourself for the sake of brevity alone. Your letter should give the receiver an intelligent idea of who and what you are, or what you have done and want to do. The business man, flooded with applications, will naturally read a brief, yet comprehensive, letter, and give it preference over those filled with superfluous words or flowery expressions; but remember that he wants to know what you are good for, and you must tell him, even though your letter occupies more than a page.

3. One of the best ways to proceed is to describe yourself fully, without any attempt at brevity, then rewrite your letter, omitting all superfluous and useless words, bringing it down to the smallest comprehensible size.

4. It is better to have paragraphs in your letter, in preference to making it look solid. It is easier to read a letter with frequent paragraphs.

Do not have more than one subject, or make more than one point, in a paragraph.

5. In replying to an advertisement, be sure

106 *The Art of Letter Writing*

to answer all of the particulars mentioned in the advertisement. The advertiser would not specify qualifications or conditions, if he did not desire an answer to all of them. Any omission will prejudice him against you. It is not always advisable to limit your reply to answers to the questions appearing in the advertisement. If there is more to say about yourself, present it; but do not write in your letter anything which would appear to be of no interest to the receiver.

6. It is well invariably to add a paragraph to the effect that you would like an interview. If you are engaged, and cannot call except at a certain time, be sure to specify it. If you can be reached by telephone, always give your telephone number.

7. Avoid extravagant adjectives and expressions, and make all of your statements those of facts.

8. Under no circumstances use flowery sentences, or be too intimate in your letter. Briefly state facts about yourself, and let each statement stand by itself.

9. Every letter should start with a date line, like

Boston, Mass., Jan. 1, 1913.

The foregoing can be placed at the bottom of the letter, but it is better to have it appear at the top.

10. Your street, office, or residence address may appear above the date line at the beginning of the letter, but it is advisable to write it at the close.

11. If you are addressing a firm, like "John Smith & Co.," or a corporation, like "Smith Manufacturing Co.," the following form should be used:

Smith Manufacturing Co.,
New York City.
Gentlemen:

The term "Dear Sirs" may be used instead of "Gentlemen," but "Gentlemen" is preferable.

12. Never begin a letter with "Sir," unless you are addressing a United States Government official, in which case "Sir" must be used. Say "Dear Sir" or "Dear Madam." The term "Dear Madam" applies to single as well as to married women. "Dear Miss" is bad form. Close your letter with "Respectfully yours," or "Yours respectfully," or "Yours truly," or "Very truly yours;" the two former are preferable. Never write "Sincerely yours," or "Yours sincerely," unless you are addressing a personal friend.

13. Your signature should be plainly written, and do not sign your name "J. T. Smith," but "John T. Smith." If you have an unusual

108 *The Art of Letter Writing*

name, like "Adolphus K. Coleblast," be very particular to write it with the utmost legibility. If your name is "John Milton Tennyson," it is bad form to sign your name in full, and it looks like affectation; just write it "John M. Tennyson."

14. Whenever possible, use the typewriter, unless applying for a position of book-keeper or for one where the quality of handwriting is essential; but even in this case, it would be better to write your letter on the typewriter, and to enclose a few sentences showing your handwriting, referring to these sentences in your letter, in an expression such as, "Sample of handwriting enclosed."

15. It is well to repeat your name, type-written, as follows:

John T. Smith,
100 Beacon St.,
Boston, Mass.
Telephone, Main 406.

I would suggest that you go even further, and give both addresses, somewhat as follows:

John T. Smith,
Office, 18 Broad St.,
Boston, Mass.
Telephone, Main 206.

Residence, 307 Mills St.,
Allston, Mass.
Telephone, Allston 607.

If you have no telephone number, give the name of the nearest pay-station from which a messenger can be sent to you.

16. Be particular with your numerals; they should be very clearly written.

17. It is well to keep a copy of every letter sent out. If the same letter is sent to several persons, one copy is sufficient; but write the name and address of each person to whom the letter is sent upon the copy or upon the back of it.

18. Avoid wrong spelling. Unless you are sure of the word, look it up in the dictionary. While many business men are bad spellers, they may detect misspelled words. Misspelled words are sure to be detrimental to your chances.

19. Punctuation is essential. If you do not know how to punctuate, learn how. Good punctuation makes your letter more legible.

20. Strenuously avoid all stereotyped and overused expressions, such as "I take my pen in hand," or "Having seen your advertisement, I thought I would write."

21. Never use an expression like "I know that I am competent," or "I am sure I can fill

110 *The Art of Letter Writing*

the position." You cannot possibly know in advance, and any such statement shows your ignorance or egotism.

22. Never use a poor, faded, or colored ink. Only black and blue-black are permissible. Do not pour water in your ink-stand. Good ink cannot be procured that way. Get a fresh bottle. You cannot be too particular about little things.

23. Use a pen adapted to your style of handwriting.

24. Be careful of your letter paper. Have it clean and fresh. Never use a scrap of paper or torn sheet, nor an envelope which does not match the paper. It is better to use white, unruled paper, than any color or tint, and of a size known as half-sheet, which is about eight and a half inches from right to left and eleven inches from top to bottom. A full sheet is a folded sheet, and folded sheets are not in good form commercially.

25. While social paper is permissible for a woman to use, if you are applying for a commercial position, give commercial paper the preference.

26. Write only upon one side of the sheet. If it is necessary to use more than one sheet, number them "2," "3," "4," etc.

27. If you have stationery of your own, with your name and address printed upon it, by all

means give this paper the preference, provided it is of suitable size.

28. Under no circumstances use hotel stationery, but club letter paper is permissible. Many business men refuse to read a letter of application written upon a hotel letter-head, which may indicate that the writer is without permanent position or home.

29. There is no objection to using letter paper of the firm you are connected with, provided your relations with them are satisfactory. But I would suggest a preference to plain paper, unless you have a letter-head of your own. Avoid the use of any letter-head relating to the liquor, pool, or sporting business, unless you are applying for that kind of a position.

30. I strongly advise against the presentation of a secret address, or post office box, or of signature by initials only. Such action arouses suspicion.

31. Place the stamp on the envelope on the upper right-hand corner, top up, and stick it on straight. Never stick a stamp for a reply on your letter paper. Better enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. As a rule, however, there is no necessity of enclosing a stamp for a reply, but there is no objection to enclosing an unstamped, addressed envelope. Be sure that your stamp is securely affixed to the envelope, for stamps often drop off.

112 *The Art of Letter Writing*

32. If you enclose written references, and desire to have them returned, an addressed, stamped envelope should accompany them, with the request that they be returned to you.

33. Never write a letter of application in a hurry. Take plenty of time.

34. Read your letter carefully; better read it two or three times before you send it.

35. Avoid all appearance of egoism, and never overstate your qualifications. While you should give the appearance of modesty, do not be overmodest, and refuse to present proper self-respect. Your services are for sale, and you should write your qualifications to the best advantage.

36. It is always advisable to give references, even though they are not asked for. Do not bunch your references together. Let each occupy a paragraph, and precede them with some expression like "I refer to." If you are applying for a business position, the majority of references should be those from business men and houses. If, on the other hand, you are addressing a professional man, professional references may be preferred, but add one or two references from business men.

37. It is well to enclose copies of written references, in which case, at the top of each letter, you should write the word "Copy." Original letters of reference should not be enclosed,

as they may be lost, unless they are personally addressed to the one to whom you are applying.

38. If you are replying to advertisements for "Help Wanted," make an effort to obtain the earliest edition of the paper, even if you have to get out of bed at 5 A. M. to do so. Answer the advertisement at the earliest possible moment. It might be well for you to have several letters written, so as to save time, leaving space for the filling in of name and address. Carry your letter to the newspaper office, or mail it so as to catch the earliest mail. The early applicant has the advantage over those whose letters arrive later.

39. Specify your qualifications, each by itself, and each in a paragraph by itself, and give definite information. If you are a stenographer, be sure to state your rate of speed and the machine you use, unless you can manipulate all machines. Under no circumstances say you can take ordinary dictation, for that means nothing. The term "ordinary" is altogether too ambiguous. State specifically the number of words you can write per minute, and whether or not you can accurately read your notes. If you do not know your speed, find out what it is. If you are applying for a factory job, give specifically your experience, and under no circumstances speak of your qualifications in general terms. Do this, even though the advertise-

114 *The Art of Letter Writing*

ment may not ask for definite information. If you are applying for the position of salesman, enumerate briefly the positions you have occupied and the lines of goods you have sold, when, and where.

40. Always state whether or not you are married, unless you sign your name with a "Miss," in which case it should be signed as follows: "(Miss) Jennie T. Smith." Information about your family may be given; for example, state whether or not you live at home.

41. While the majority of positions do not require the holders to be under bond, there is no objection to stating that you can give bonds, unless the position applied for is purely clerical.

42. Unless you are applying for the position of servant, chauffeur, engineer, janitor, etc., it is well to avoid any expression like, "Strictly temperate," "Do not smoke," etc. And there is no need of saying that you are thoroughly reliable, because the statement by itself is without evidence.

43. If you have had little business experience, frankly admit it, if you are seeking a business position.

44. Always state what kind of education you have enjoyed, and give the name of the last school you attended or graduated from. If you are a college man, or have been educated at some high institution of learning, give the name

of the college or school, and date of graduation; like "Harvard, '92." But if your reputation is established, mention of your educational qualifications need not be made.

45. If you are occupying a position, always state frankly why you desire to make a change, provided you say nothing detrimental of your employer.

46. If you are out of work, and have been previously engaged, do not make any effort to cover up your record. It is sure to come out, sooner or later.

47. Give the lowest salary that you will start with, if the advertisement so requests. But you need not give this information, if it is not asked for.

48. When answering an advertisement, you may begin your letter with some expression like, "In answer to your advertisement in the Herald," but do not use the conventional forms which are commonly written, and read somewhat as follows: "Looking over the Herald this morning, I chanced to see your advertisement," or "I notice that you are advertising in the Herald for a ——." You should not do anything by chance. If you are looking for a position, it is to be supposed you are following the "want" advertisements. Further, it is of no consequence to the advertiser whether or not your letter is the result of his advertisement, or

116 *The Art of Letter Writing*

because you heard of the vacancy in some other way. All unnecessary words and expressions should be avoided. A letter of application will receive more attention if it gives the applicant's qualifications without the addition of meaningless words or expressions. Openings like "I desire to become an applicant," or "I would respectfully apply for the position," have little value. It is self-evident that you are an applicant, or you would not have made application.

49. I have read probably 20,000 letters of application, and the majority of them begin somewhat as follows: "Seeing your advertisement in the 'World' of to-day, would say that I am competent for the position offered." This antagonizes the receiver, and the letter immediately goes into the waste-basket. It is far better to say, "I am a stenographer of ten years' experience," than it is to write, "I am an experienced stenographer."

50. Never use an expression like "I wish to state," or "I beg to state," or "I would say," or "I take the liberty of saying." Start in at business, as: "I have had six years' experience as a stenographer, can write 130 words a minute, and can read every one of my notes 99 times out of a hundred."

51. I present the following forms of application which are adaptable to practically all of the conditions:

The Art of Letter Writing 117

Six years' experience as stenographer in law business.

Head stenographer for last two years.

Can take 150 words a minute, and guarantee my notes.

Graduate of Brookline High School, 1907; best speller in class.

Live with parents.

Refer to

Stenographer:

Three years with Smith & Jones, wholesale grocers, 44 Broad Street; left because firm failed.

Two years with First National Bank; was dropped because men supplanted women.

Write 125 words a minute; can read my notes.

Graduated from Girls' High School, 1908, and from Smith's Commercial School, 1909.

Age, 24.

Parents live in Fall River, and I board with friends in Chelsea.

I refer to

Stenographer (male).

Six years' experience.

One year in bank; it consolidated.

118 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Two years in lawyer's office; he retired.
Two years in woolen house; it failed.
One year in railroad office; no opportunity.

Write 140 words a minute; sure of my notes.

Age, 26; married, one child.

Graduated from Hyde Park High School, 1905.

Graduated from American Commercial College, 1906.

Can hold my present position indefinitely.

Want more opportunity.

Can furnish bonds.

Salary wanted, \$20.00.

High-grade references.

Refer to

There is no objection to, but no advantage in, writing a letter in the third person, somewhat as follows:

The writer was for four years a stenographer at Jones' Department Store. For last year he was Private Secretary to President Jones.
Death of the President cause of his leaving.

The Art of Letter Writing 119

He can write 140 words a minute, and
is sure of his notes.

Graduate of Welles College, 1901.

Graduated from Northern College, secretarial course, 1903.

Age 30.

Salary, \$18.

Refer to

The following form is to be recommended:

For five years chauffeur for John T.
Smith, President of Smith Manufacturing Co.

Graduate of Crescent Automobile
School.

President Smith has moved to Omaha.
Have driven Packard, Peerless, and
Cadillac cars.

Made three trips, averaging 3,300 miles.
Can make ordinary repairs.

Age 29; married, two children.

Refer to

A very effective method of obtaining a position is to have your application set in type, and printed in the center of a commercial letter

120 *The Art of Letter Writing*

sheet. The type measure should not exceed two and a half inches, so that there may be a wide margin all around it, or it may be in the center of a card of a size which will go into an ordinary commercial envelope. It should invariably be sent under seal.

This form may be used for answering an advertisement, or can be sent out promiscuously. For example, let us suppose you desire to become a salesman for a wholesale house. It would probably be profitable for you to send one of these printed notices to the leading houses in the line you are familiar with, but, if possible, address it to some officer of the firm, like, "John T. Smith, President, Smith Manufacturing Co.," instead of to "Smith Manufacturing Co."

The printed notice need not be accompanied by a letter.

It is obvious, of course, that a majority of the firms addressed may have no opening, but if you send to as many as a hundred, the chances are that at least five of them have a vacancy, and a number of the others might file your card for future reference.

A printed notice like this is unique, shows enterprise, is easier to read than is a letter, and is preëminently businesslike.

I give a few forms on the following pages.

Do You Want a Salesman?

For eight years successfully sold shoes
in New England and New York
State.

Can retain present position with prom-
ise of increase in salary.

Desire to leave because of change of
management and policy.

Business has reorganized.

Present salary, \$40. a week.

35 years old.

Have a wife and three children.

Own my home.

Highest grade of bank and mercantile
references.

Can give bonds.

Address

Do You Want a Book-keeper?

**For three years head book-keeper in
retail clothing store.**

Firm failed.

Can handle any set of books.

Want \$18.00 a week.

**24 years old; unmarried, live with
parents.**

**Graduated from Worcester High School,
1907.**

**Desire to make change on account of
lack of prospects.**

**Can leave with good-will of house I am
working for.**

**Refer to Mr. John T. Smith, Cashier,
Second National Bank; Mr. William
Jones, President, Jones Manufactur-
ing Co., 88 West Street, Boston,
Mass.; Mr. Karl R. White, retired,
Hingham, Mass.; Mr. Robert T.
Black, Editor, Tribune; and to
present employer.**

The following is long, but is justifiable, because every paragraph gives information.

I Want A Job

19 years old.

Graduate of Springfield High School,
1911.

Studied book-keeping at evening school
for one year.

Have had no business experience.

Want a position with opportunity to
learn business.

Prefer to be in office of wholesale or
manufacturing house.

Would not care to take up book-keep-
ing or clerical work, except as a
means to an end.

Preference in favor of the active side of
business, selling in particular.

Salary at start of no consequence.

Live with parents.

For integrity and standing, refer to
Hon. John T. Smith, 77 White St.,
Allston, Mass.; Mr. William R.
Jones, President, Jones Manufactur-
ing Co., 97 Water St., Boston; Dr.
George T. White, Superintendent of
Schools, Hyde Park, Mass.

The following form of printed application is
likely to be profitable:

What I Can do For Sale

I can sell goods.

If you don't want to see me now, file me
for reference.

The appended forms of application may be
printed on a postal card, but it is better to mail
them under seal:

Experience For Sale

What I know about selling furniture at
retail is yours if you want me.

I know
How to
Keep books

10 years' experience.

If firm hadn't failed, I would not be out
of a job.

I present a few additional forms, which may
be used to advantage, either written or printed:

I will Saw Wood

or build fires, or do anything else in the way of hard work.

I know how to keep books

Because I have kept them seven years.
Drop postal for full particulars, or telephone, Main 908.

Stove-Seller

If you want a man, with an earned reputation, to sell stoves, write John T. Smith, P. O. Box 48, New York City.

Paint-Salesman

I am out of a job because the paint-makers I sold goods for have failed.
Telephone, John Smith, Main 87.

If your record is bad, and you were discharged for reason, it may be well for you frankly to admit it, and write or print something as follows:

**Discharged
Salesman
Open for
Engagement**

128 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Sold hardware on the road for 17 years. Always made good. Discharged because I drank too much. Have reformed. Here's your chance to get a mighty good man who made a fool of himself, and won't do it again.

The following form may be sent out generally:

One bank president, two bank cashiers, six successful wholesalers, will vouch for my business ability.

Three lawyers, a doctor, and a minister will tell you about my social standing and integrity.

Began at the bottom and worked up. Sold flour on the road for five years. Firm liquidated.

Age 32; married, one child.

While a statement of qualifications should, upon general principles, be given, it is occasionally advisable to send out something of extreme and unique brevity. I present a form which is likely to attract attention.

I Want a Job

Can do any kind of work; the hardest
work doesn't phase me.

Both the heading and the reading matter should be set in plain type, the heading in a size of type three, four, or five times larger than that used for the reading matter. The appearance will be improved if a single or double rule is printed at the top and bottom of the matter. The reading-matter type should not be smaller than what is technically known as "8 Point," nor larger than "12 Point." Eight-Point type is about a third larger than that used for the reading matter in ordinary newspapers, and 12-Point type is considerably larger, and the largest size permissible for book work. Eight- or 10-Point type is preferable.

The heading, if desired, need not be in the form of a question, and may read "Book-keeper Wants Position," instead of "Do You Want a Book-keeper?"

I would recommend that the matter be sent out under seal.

There is no objection to other forms of typo-

graphical display; for example, the matter may be printed in the center of a sheet of paper as large as 24 by 36 inches, this sheet to be folded and mailed in a mailing tube. The very size of it alone would attract attention.

If you use a mailing tube, write the name and address upon a slip of paper and paste on to the tube, rather than attempt to write upon the tube itself.

Under no circumstances say anything derogatory of the firm you are working for, or have worked for, unless their integrity and business methods have been publicly criticised.

If there are inside reasons why you should leave, through no fault of your own, use such an expression as, "Desire to make change for good and sufficient reasons, which cannot be given except in confidence."

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

THERE is no special form for letters of introduction, but the simplest is to be recommended. A good form is as follows:

Mr. John T. Smith,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Smith (or My dear Mr.
Smith, or Dear Sir):

Allow me to introduce to you our
mutual friend, Mr. William R. Black.
Anything that you can do for him, will
be appreciated by

Sincerely yours,
(or Very truly yours),

There is no objection, and it is sometimes
advisable, to describe Mr. Black, in the letter
of introduction, somewhat as follows:

I have known Mr. Black for ten
years, and can vouch for his integrity

132 *The Art of Letter Writing*

and ability. I consider him competent to fill any clerical position.

If the party introduced is a close friend of the writer's, it will be well to make the letter a little more cordial. Something like the following is in good form:

It gives me pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. William R. Black.

He is a warm personal friend of mine, and I would personally appreciate anything which you may do for him.

The envelope including a letter of introduction, should be addressed about as follows:

Mr. John T. Smith,
President, Smith Manufacturing Co.,
404 Main Street,
Portland, Maine.

Introducing Mr. William R. Black.

The envelope should not be sealed.

If a letter of introduction is to be sent by mail by the party introduced, an envelope need

not be used by the one introducing, and the letter accompanying should begin somewhat as follows:

Enclosed is a letter from our mutual friend, Mr. John T. Smith.

Occasionally the introducer does not like to place in the letter facts about the party introduced. In this case, he should write a letter somewhat as follows: "Allow me to introduce Mr. William R. Black, of whom I have written you."

While a letter of introduction does not make the party giving it responsible for the one introduced, he, by unwritten law, somewhat guarantees him. Therefore, if there is anything against him, he should write, or telephone, the one addressed, giving full particulars, and mark the letter "Confidential."

LETTERS TO FRIENDS

SOCIAL letters, written to friends or to personal acquaintances, should not begin, as a rule, with "Dear Sir" or "My dear Sir."

If the party addressed is a very close friend, begin the letter with "Dear John," or "My dear John," or "Dear Mary," or "My dear Mary."

"My" should be omitted, if your relations are very intimate, as "My dear" is more formal than "Dear;" but never address a person by his given name, unless he is an intimate friend. Better say, "Dear Mr. Smith," or "My dear Mr. Smith," or "Dear Miss Jones," or "My dear Miss Jones."

While the ethics of business suggest that all letters addressed to an individual begin "Dear Sir," there is no real objection to saying "Dear Mr. Smith," or "My dear Mr. Smith," or "Dear John," or "My dear John," if the receiver is a close friend. Custom permits the use of the foregoing, but when in doubt, say "Dear Sir."

A social or semibusiness letter, addressed to a stranger, may begin, "My dear Mr. Smith,"

or even "Dear Mr. Smith," if the contents of the letter are purely or largely personal. For example, let us suppose that you, as a doctor, or minister, or other professional man, desire to obtain information of a social or professional character: it is better taste to begin your letter, "Dear Dr. Smith," or "Dear Mr. Smith," than to use the plain "Dear Sir."

Letters of a personal character should never close with "Respectfully yours." Use some expression like "Sincerely yours," or "Very sincerely yours," or "Yours very sincerely," or "Fraternally yours." "Very truly yours" is permissible.

Social letters, however, should never close with "Very truly yours" or "Truly yours." "Sincerely yours" is a good form.

All business letters should be signed by your full name, but intimate social letters may be signed by your given name only, provided the receiver is not likely to mistake your identity. It is better, however, to sign all social letters with the full name, unless your name is printed on the letter paper.

I recall an incident. I have four intimate friends by the name of "Fred," and the handwriting of each one resembles that of the others. I recently received four postals from four "Freds," and had difficulty in locating the senders.

HUMOROUS LETTERS

THERE is absolutely no excuse or reason for the injection of humorous or of witty expressions into a business letter addressed to a stranger. There would appear, however, to be no objection to a few pleasantries in business correspondence between personal friends; but clean-cut "yea and nay" statements are to be preferred.

The writer of a social letter has a special license to do as he pleases, and if he is genuinely witty, I would recommend that he display some of his humor in his letters to friends. Witty expressions both lighten and enliven a letter; but humor should never be written unless the writer of it is reasonably certain that the receiver of it will appreciate it. It must not be of a biting quality, and great care should be taken not to offend the receiver.

The writer should realize that what he says on paper is often open to more than one construction, and must be more carefully guarded than conversation.

It is obvious that the receiver of a letter is

likely to be removed from the writer of it, and is permanently or temporarily living in an environment with which the sender of the letter may not be acquainted. A pleasantry, even if really witty, may be out of place, because of something which has happened to the receiver of the letter. The writer cannot anticipate the feelings or conditions of the receiver with anything more than an ordinary degree of accuracy. The receiver may be suffering from some bereavement, his wife may be dangerously ill. A joke on marital relations between husband and wife will not be appreciated if one of them is sick, or they are suffering from misunderstanding.

The best rule to follow is, When in doubt, don't.

LETTERS OF COMMENDATION AND CONGRATULATION

LIFE is hard at best, and every one has troubles of his own. Honest or sincere praise, or commendation, smooths over the hard places and throws gleams of sunlight into the clouds.

If a friend or acquaintance of yours has done something worthy of commendation, and you cannot meet him personally, write him and tell him how much you enjoyed what he has written, or how much you appreciated what he has done.

Let us suppose, for example, that a friend of yours has delivered a remarkable address, and that an account of it has appeared in the newspaper. Write a letter telling him you have read the speech, and that it has pleased you, and comment upon some particular point which he has made. This letter will be very acceptable, especially if the receiver is feeling discouraged, or has gained the impression that he did not do well.

If a friend of yours has been appointed to an office, or has received promotion, write him

The Art of Letter Writing 139

a brief line of congratulation. Never fail to acknowledge an engagement between two friends, and write to both parties, if you know them. The somewhat common custom of congratulating only the bridegroom-elect is sheer nonsense. Congratulate both.

LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE

SOCIAL etiquette requires the sending of a letter to any friend, and even to an acquaintance, who is suffering from any disaster or is under bereavement.

I dislike to give any set forms, for the reason that if they are used, they are likely to appear stilted and formal, and not properly to represent the feelings of the sender.

If you are addressing a very sentimental person under bereavement, there is no objection to writing a long letter, even a flowery or a very sentimental one. But men and women of intelligence and of liberal education prefer a short expression of sympathy, rather than long-drawn-out sentences and expressions of sentiment and feeling, which may be styled as "gushy." Then, the writer should make an effort not to harrow the feelings of the receiver.

A letter expressing a sincere sympathy materially soothes the feelings of the receiver; but a long letter, minutely referring to the trouble, even to detail, is likely to work the opposite of the intention of the writer, and to make the

bereavement harder for the receiver to bear. Better confine yourself to some simple expression of sympathy, like, "Words are inadequate to express my feelings," or "There are times when one cannot express himself in written words," or "The pen refuses to adequately express my sympathy for you."

Letters of condolence in case of death, or other bereavement, should be most carefully worded, and every effort should be made not to increase the suffering of the receiver. Put a little brightness into your letter, and words of encouragement.

LETTERS OF PROPOSAL

I APPROACH this subject with diffidence, and I positively refuse to present any set forms, for the simple reason that in letters of this kind, the body of the letter should not follow any printed form or style; it should come from the heart of the sender, and should represent him, and not appear to be written with the assistance of a book or other guide.

If you are unable properly to express yourself, the chances are that the receiver of your proposal is in the same condition, and may have consulted the same book or forms that you use in framing the letter; in which case, your letter of proposal falls flat, and it should.

If you want to propose to a woman, do so in a manly and yet sentimental way, laying your heart before her. Expressions of sentiment, even if overdone, are certainly permissible. Write to her as you would talk to her, and write as much as you want to. Here, brevity is not a virtue.

Do not be afraid of compromising yourself, for the action itself binds you and compromises you, and you cannot avoid it.

Do not address the woman as "Dear Miss Smith." If you do not know her well enough to call her "Dear Mary," or to use a more endearing term, get better acquainted with her before you propose.

Perhaps your letter will look silly years afterwards, but what if it does? If you mean what you say, say it with all of the adjectives you can call together, and do not be afraid of using endearing words.

If it were not for sentiment and love, life would not be worth living.

If the one you are proposing to is not familiar with your financial or other circumstances, state those circumstances frankly in your letter. It is better, however, to familiarize the woman with who and what you are before you propose to her.

As a rule, I would advise against any over-expression of your unworthiness. If you believe you are unworthy, you have no right to propose to her, and you should not belittle yourself. If you feel that you are worthy, and say that you are not, you are a liar.

Letters of proposal, while they should be sentimental, should be of the utmost frankness, with no disguise. State your case as it is, and present your feelings as they are.

If there ever is a time when you should be your whole self, and should not receive aid from

144 *The Art of Letter Writing*

an outsider, it is when you write a letter of proposal, or when you propose by word of mouth.

Thousands of illiterate persons write letters of proposal from forms which would do credit to a literary writer, and they cannot properly represent the sender.

Keep away from all forms and set styles, and simply write what you feel, even though you may appear to make a mess of it.

Under no circumstances attempt to be any one else, and do not copy another's style.

PARAGRAPHING

PARAGRAPHS in a letter open it up, so to speak, and make it easier reading, especially if it is hand-written. Better have too many paragraphs than an insufficient number.

Never allow two subjects to appear in the same paragraph.

Each paragraph should be complete in itself, unless the matter is too long for one paragraph, in which case cut it up into several paragraphs.

If your letter is a hand-written one, and covers several subjects, it is well to separate it into distinct parts, by running dashes in the center of the page. This materially assists the reader in understanding what you have to say.

Avoid long paragraphs. They are hard to read, and hard to understand.

A paragraph in a letter should seldom occupy more than a dozen lines.

A letter to be easy reading, must be open, so to speak. The subjects must be kept apart, and important points written by themselves.

There is no objection, where you are bringing

out several things of importance, to numbering each paragraph or subject.

Some typewriters are equipped with a ribbon of two colors, one in black, blue-black, green, or purple, and the other in red. The use of the red for important lines and headings is to be recommended, provided it is not overdone.

The body of the letter should be written in black, or in blue-black, or dark blue, in preference to purple or other color of ink. Yellow ink is to be avoided.

These suggestions apply also to hand-written letters.

CAPITALIZATION

AVOID the use of capitals, except for proper names, as overcapitalization is in bad taste, and places an emphasis upon words which do not need it. For example: when you use an expression in the body of a letter like "your company," or "your house," it is not necessary to capitalize "company," or "house;" nor need general names of commodities be capitalized. If you refer, however, to "Star Flour," Flour may be capitalized, but flour, when used generally, should begin with a small letter.

If you are writing for information for, say, blacking in general, begin blacking with a small "b," but if you are referring to any particular kind of blacking, like "Crescent Blacking," the capitalization of Blacking is preferable.

It is not necessary to capitalize a word like "city," when you are writing something like, "I was in your city yesterday." But "city" should be capitalized when it appears as a part of the name, like "New York City" or "Kansas City."

If you desire to emphasize a point, it is better

148 *The Art of Letter Writing*

to underline it, but do not over-underline. Emphasize by underlining a few of the important points, but underlining, as a rule, is not to be recommended, as it has a tendency to confuse the reader.

Capital letters are not easy to read, except when the words capitalized are short.

ABBREVIATIONS

NEVER abbreviate any technical term, or anything else, when there is the slightest opportunity for misconception. Do not use "cat." for catalogue, or "Dr." for Doctor, unless it is followed by the name of the doctor. If you refer to the person as "Doctor," write out "Doctor" in full, and this rule should apply to all other titles when the name does not follow. Under no circumstances say "Dear Dr.," or "Dear Gen.," or "Dear Maj." Always write out "Dear Doctor," or "Dear General," or "Dear Major."

Never write "rec." for received.

Names of the month, like December, may be abbreviated "Dec.," but the shorter names of the months, like May and April, should be spelled out in full. There is no objection, however, to abbreviating names of the days, like "Mon.," although it is better to write them in full.

THE USE OF FIGURES

A GENERAL, but unwritten rule, suggests that figures appearing in the body of the letter be spelled out if under 10; figures to be used for 10 and over, unless the letter is a contract, or important order, in which case it is well to spell them out, and follow with figures enclosed in parentheses: for example, "Twenty-five thousand (25,000) dollars."

Figures in tables should not be spelled out. If the figures represent a price, it is well to write thus, "\$25,000," but the dollar mark may be omitted in a table.

Tables of figures should be carefully written, and in tabular form, — the hundreds under hundreds, tens under tens, etc., — so that the receiver can verify their correctness without difficulty.

All tables of figures should be by themselves; that is, they should not be run into the reading matter.

PUNCTUATION

THERE are various rules for punctuation, which are substantially alike, and the variations are of little consequence. As these rules can be found in any book of grammar or punctuation, it is unnecessary to give them here in full. It is better, however, to overpunctuate than to underpunctuate, for punctuation marks open up a letter, and make it easier to read. I will, however, give a few simple rules of ordinary punctuation:

1. End every sentence with a period, and place a period after every abbreviation, like "Dr.," "Mr.," "M. D.," "Rev.," etc., but do not use it after the abbreviations containing an apostrophe. If you write "Gen." for "General," place a period after it, but not if you spell it "Gen'l."

2. Commas should be used where there are short pauses, and always in a list of words like the following: Dogs, cats, and horses. The comma, however, should be omitted before "and" where there are only two nouns, like "dogs and cats." Always place a comma after

152 *The Art of Letter Writing*

the name when it is followed by "Jr.," "Esq.," "M. D.," etc., and after it if other matter follows.

3. The semicolon is used in a compound sentence to separate clauses of equal rank; as, for example, in the following: "The men went into the woods silently; they came back, however, shouting."

4. The colon is used to separate the co-ordinate parts of a compound sentence, when one or more of them are complex sentences in which a semicolon has been used. It is also used to set off or introduce important matter. "He went when the way was clear; but he could not stay: nevertheless we did not blame him," is an example of the first, as is the following of the second: "The opposition was of three kinds: personal, party, and social."

5. An interrogation mark should follow every sentence which asks a question.

6. An exclamation point denotes something emphatically said, or sudden emotion.

7. Quotation marks are used wherever you are directly quoting from another. If there is a quotation within a quotation, single quotation marks should be used for it. For example, regular quotation marks should be used in the following sentence: In the words of our mutual friend, John Smith, "All men, save you and I, are liars." The correct use of single quotation

marks appears in the following sentence: In his speech before the Senate, John Smith said, "I would call your attention to the words of the immortal Washington, in the famous address in which he said, 'Let all men be men.'"

Names of newspapers may be enclosed with quotation marks, but it is not necessary to do so. Everything in a letter that is directly quoted should be enclosed in quotation marks. Usually the sentence should begin with a capital, unless the quoted matter is the ending of a sentence, when a capital letter should not appear. Quotation marks should not be used for the names of firms or companies.

8. The parenthesis need not be used, except occasionally, in letters. It indicates an inserted sentence or clause.

9. The dash may follow a colon, or may be used in place of a comma, or with a comma. It breaks up a sentence.

REPETITION OF WORDS

WHILE repetition is to be avoided, it is better to repeat a word than to sacrifice clearness by not doing so. Some writers, instead of making each statement or paragraph cover the ground, refer to other paragraphs or to other letters. Do not do this, unless it would require too much space to make each paragraph or section complete in itself. Do not make it difficult for the reader to understand what you have written. Better repeat the same word in the same sentence, even though it is opposed to the rules of higher rhetoric and construction, than to allow opportunity for misconception.

For example, if you are referring to, say, "Star Flour," better repeat the word "Star," even several times, than to give the reader opportunity to think you are referring to some other flour or to flour in general.

Clearness is all-important, and it is better to ignore some of the rules of writing, than to confuse the receiver.

THE USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

THE better class of letter writers strenuously avoid the use of any foreign term, word, or expression, unless it is one of common custom, like "*prima facie*."

The promiscuous use of foreign phrases indicates that the writer is an educated fool, and desires to display his education or learning.

Many professional men and women write in their letters quotations in the original language, assuming that the reader can easily translate them. This is to be avoided, unless the receiver is known to be proficient in the language used for the quotation; but even then, plain English is to be preferred.

A display of education, or of learning, in an ordinary letter, is in bad taste, and is avoided by all, save the superficial, and those who parade their education, because it appears to be all that they have which can be displayed.

THE USE OF LONG WORDS

THE writing of long words, where there are short ones of the same meaning, shows that the writer is either ignorant or an educated ignoramus.

It is in bad taste, and should be avoided.

Letters should be made easy for their receivers to read, and should be so simple that any person of common education will be able to understand them without the use of a dictionary.

Simplicity is art.

Short and plain words stand for refinement and education.

Long, or unusual words, which are forced into a letter, are good evidence that the writer's brain is little better than a receiving vault for knowledge which he does not know how to distribute.

OBSOLETE WORDS

THERE is absolutely no excuse for the use of obsolete words in a letter.

The writer of it makes a disgusting display of his educated ignorance.

Upon general principles, I would advise no one to use any word which is not found in the abridged dictionary. Because the word or term is given in a large dictionary is not a good excuse for the appearance of it in a letter.

The use of obsolete or unusual words does not stand for education or learning. It is simply a written display of arrogance and ignorance.

THE WRITING OF TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC TERMS

UNLESS your letter is addressed to one familiar with technical or scientific terms, use more than ordinary care in writing them, and never use them when you can avoid doing so, unless you are addressing one who is as familiar with them as you are.

Thousands of lawyers fill their letters with the technique of their profession to the annoyance of those who receive them.

Scientists, and other specialists, use altogether too many scientific terms, and words of the laboratory, when addressing laymen.

The value of the letter is limited to the understanding of it on the part of its receiver.

The ordinary letter should not contain any word or expression which the reader cannot understand without the help of a dictionary.

If it is necessary, however, to use technical or scientific terms, write them plainly, so that the receiver may look them up in the dictionary, if he does not understand them.

Plain English is best under all circumstances.

SIMPLICITY

UNTIL you become as proficient as Shakespeare was in the juggling of words, and are sure of a Shakespearian audience, do not attempt to put into your letter Shakespearian expressions or those of other great writers.

It has been said that it is more difficult to be simple than it is to display superficial or even deep learning.

It is a fact that the books which have lived are, for the most part, written in the simplest style and adapted to their readers.

One reason why many learned professors have failed in literature is because they wrote above their readers, or rather below their readers, for any attempt to use unusual English shows that the one who does it is mentally deficient, although his mind may be a storehouse of learning.

The ordinary letter should not be the vehicle for a display of rhetoric, or of what is known as "fine writing."

No matter if the receiver is highly educated,

160 *The Art of Letter Writing*

if you are not, you should not attempt to address him in his style.

Be yourself; you cannot be anybody else; it is useless to try.

The letter you write is your letter, not the receiver's letter, so far as the composition of it is concerned.

Simple expressions will be understood. Complicated sentences, or a display of education, may confuse the receiver, and if he is a man of real learning, he will despise the writer who attempts to ventilate his knowledge upon letter paper.

As there is no opportunity for immediate explanation, the sender should weigh his words more carefully than he would in a conversation. Many a friendship has been temporarily broken, or irrevocably lost, because a letter was misunderstood, and yet the writer of it had the best intentions.

ENCLOSING POETRY IN A LETTER

It is quite common for the writer of a social or friendly letter to a personal friend to enclose with the letter clippings from real or alleged poems, particularly if the receiver is suffering from bereavement. There is no objection to doing this, if the poem is appropriate, and truly expresses the feelings of the writer. But upon general principles, I would advise the omission of these clippings.

It is far better to express yourself in your own way, than to attempt to present your feelings in the words of others.

It is a fact that supercilious and shallow people are prone to enclose printed rhymes, usually verses which appeal to them, whether or not they are appropriate to the condition of the receiver.

Quite often, a clipping from a poem, or a copy of it, in a letter, harrows the feelings of the receiver, who may be in trouble, and the effect is opposite to the intention of the sender.

A letter is a written monologue, and it is supposed to tell the receiver what the writer would

162 *The Art of Letter Writing*

say if he were face to face with him. Of course, the letter is not likely to be so voluminous as the conversation would probably be if the sender and receiver were together, but it is personal and conversational and should not depart from personality.

PHONETIC SPELLING

PHONETIC spelling, that is, spelling words like "through," "thru," is becoming more common, particularly among some classes of educators.

Should the ordinary correspondent use this system? The answer would be both "Yes" and "No." Yes, if he is an advocate of it, and is addressing educators, or those who believe in this system: "No," for ordinary correspondence.

It is obvious that a letter should be acceptable to the receiver, as well as to the one who writes it, and any departure from custom is to be avoided, except in special cases.

INTERLINING

AVOID, whenever possible, interlining, — that is, writing words between the lines.

Interlining confuses the reader and makes the letter difficult to read. It is better to cross out your words, and write them again on the same line, or rewrite the letter. Of course, there is no objection to adding a word here and there between the lines, but avoid adding words as much as possible. Interlining does not look as badly in a hand-written letter as in one typewritten.

PLAINNESS AND CORRECTNESS

A FRIEND of mine, who is considered the best English scholar in America, once said to me, and very emphatically, "Hang correctness of speech or the written word. Make yourself plain and understood."

This great scholar, while not for a moment intending to give me the impression that he favored the ungrammatical, desired to be understood that he advocated clearness more than mere grammatical correctness.

Of course, you should be careful with your grammar, but be clear first and grammatical afterwards. Better repeat a word a dozen times, if it adds clearness to your letter, than confuse the reader by a display of rhetoric or of elaborate construction.

You desire to convey a message, and your efforts are in vain if the receiver does not understand it. Make it clear, therefore, even at a sacrifice of what the purist would consider the best English construction.

If you are writing something which is complicated, it may be well for you to present it in

two different ways, so that the reader will be sure to understand it. For example, let us suppose that you have received a letter requesting you to be in Boston on a certain date, and that you can be there on that date, but that you much prefer to arrive on a later date. You do not, however, desire to give the impression that you will not come at the time requested, if a later date will inconvenience the party addressed. You can give the right impression by writing somewhat as follows:

I can arrange to be in Boston next Monday, the 15th inst., but I have an engagement on that day, which will make it somewhat difficult for me to be with you earlier than next Wednesday, the 17th inst. Kindly understand that, if you cannot conveniently arrange it to see me on Wednesday, I will be with you on Monday.

THE USE OF THE TYPEWRITER

THE typewriter has become an industrial, commercial, and social necessity.

Comparatively few business letters, other than from small concerns, are written by hand.

The typewriter should be used invariably, even by men and concerns doing little business.

The handwritten business letter is out of date, shows lack of enterprise, and should be strenuously avoided.

If you cannot afford one of the standard typewriter machines, purchase a small and less expensive one, which will do fairly good work.

Even the best handwriting is more or less illegible and hard to read, and the receiver may lay it aside, unless it is very short.

Prominent business men, having large correspondence, often refuse to read a handwritten letter, which is given to the clerk for "translation," and may never be seen by the party to whom it is addressed.

Typewritten letters may be easily copied, and this adds another advantage to them.

Until quite recently, it was considered bad

168 *The Art of Letter Writing*

form to write a social letter upon the typewriter, but common sense has removed the ban upon it. Although a few "extremists" and "idiots in etiquette" object to the social letter written upon the typewriter, the rank and file of those worth writing to will appreciate a letter which they can read, in preference to the result of hand-labor, which is often illegible in whole or in part.

Custom, and the good sense of the people, permit the use of the typewriter for all kinds of correspondence.

It is obvious, however, that a social letter had better be written upon a folded sheet, and not upon ordinary commercial paper.

The use of the so-called "Elite" typewriter is to be recommended for social letters. This machine prints letters about two-thirds the size of the ordinary typewriter type-face, and is being used to some extent by business houses as well as for social correspondence.

A typewritten social letter should have a wide margin at the top, bottom, and sides.

HANDWRITING

WHILE the use of the typewriter, even for many social forms of letters, is to be recommended, it is obvious that those who do not possess a typewriter will be obliged to depend upon the pen.

If your handwriting is illegible, have your letter written by some clerk, or other person, who writes a readable hand; except, of course, for social correspondence. But a little practice, however, will enable even the poor hand-writer to improve his style. If you cannot write even lines, then use ruled paper. Better have too many paragraphs than too few, especially in a letter written by hand.

Be careful to spell out proper and technical names, and see to it that such letters as "u" and "n" are distinct, as they look very much alike in handwriting.

Do not abbreviate, except when you are sure that the abbreviation will be understood. Not one writer in a hundred is a correct speller; and yet the majority of poor spellers detect intuitively a misspelled word.

170 *The Art of Letter Writing*

Every correspondent should have by him either a large dictionary, or an abridged one, which contains all of the words in common use, and is easier to consult than is a larger book.

Do not take chances with your memory; look up all words you are not sure of.

THE POST OFFICE

Whatever may be the arguments for and against the government ownership or control of transportation of every kind, including railroads, express, telegraph, and telephone, it is probable that no public service corporation, or any privately run industry, better accommodates the public, or is more efficient, than the post office department, which successfully conducts the transportation of letters and merchandise, does beside a virtual express business, and, further, furnishes a depository for the people's money.

The rates of postage changed recently, and probably another rearrangement of postal rates will be made. Consequently, it is obvious that it would be inadvisable to give these rates here, and the reader is referred to the Official Postal Guide or to post masters and postal clerks.

The United States Post Office Department separates mailable matter into four classes:

First-Class:—Letters and everything sealed,

172 *The Art of Letter Writing*

whether accompanied by a written message or not.

Second-Class:—Newspapers, magazines, and all periodicals published at intervals of not less than three months, upon which is printed "Entered as second-class matter at the post office at——."

Third-Class:—Books, pamphlets, catalogs, maps, calendars, and other printed matter.

Fourth-Class:—Merchandise of every kind, including most of what is specified under Third Class. (See Parcel Post on another page.)

All mail matter, except that sent by Parcel Post, may be registered by affixing ten cents extra postage to the envelope, wrapper, or package.

Letters, and all kinds of packages included in the Parcel Post, may be sent by Special Delivery for ten cents in addition to the regular postage.

Special Delivery stamps are furnished by the post office, but are not necessary if ten cents additional in stamps is placed upon the envelope, wrapper, or package, and the words "Special Delivery" are printed or written prominently upon it.

Special Delivery mail may be deposited in street boxes, but time may be saved by mailing it at the Special Delivery chute in the post office. Even if Special Delivery matter is not

of the first class, it is likely to be transported as rapidly as first-class matter.

Postal-cards and post-cards may be mailed to any part of the United States or to any foreign country.

If the person addressed has moved, and the receiving post office has his new address, first-class matter will be forwarded, if the sender writes "Please forward" on the envelope; but second-, third-, and fourth-class matter will not be forwarded unless stamps are sent by the sender or receiver. This condition, however, does not apply to post offices within a postal district, which will forward any class of mail without extra charge.

If stamps to the amount of the rate for one ounce are affixed to first-class matter weighing more than an ounce, it will be forwarded, the receiver to pay the additional postage, and notification will be sent by the post master to the person addressed on second-, third-, and fourth-class matter, informing him that he must send additional postage for the forwarding of the package or article.

The Post Office Department does not demand that the name and address of the sender, preceded by the word "From," appear on any class of mail matter except that sent by Parcel Post, but all writers are advised to place their name and address in the upper left-hand corner.

FOREIGN MAIL MATTER

With few exceptions practically everything can be mailed from the United States to any foreign country at a rate of postage somewhat higher than that required for domestic mail.

Books and merchandise mailed to foreign countries may be subject to duty, the receiving station collecting what is due. This varies with different countries, and many articles are not dutiable. Inquiry should be made at the post office or custom house.

Packages mailed to foreign countries should be packed with the greatest care, the address very plainly written, and also the name and address of the sender.

The address may be written in the language of the receiving country or in English.

The rates of postage, and postal regulations, for foreign countries are subject to occasional change. Before mailing letters or packages, the United States Official Postal Guide should be consulted or inquiry made at the local post office.

Books, and practically every kind of merchan-

dise if not perishable or dangerous, may be mailed to foreign countries.

The United States issues money-orders for a moderate fee, which are payable in most of the foreign countries. They are absolutely safe, and a very convenient method of exchange.

PARCEL POST

On January 1, 1913, there was established in the United States what is known as the Parcel Post, a method of transportation for fourth-class matter mainly, which has made mailable many articles that before could not be sent through the mail.

Formerly the rate of postage was based upon weight, irrespective of the distance traveled. The Parcel Post rate, however, is calculated both by weight and distance, and the United States is divided into what are officially known as zones.

Parcel Post rates have been recently changed, and it is quite likely that other changes will be made. For this reason it is inexpedient to give them here, and the reader is referred to the local post masters or to the United States Official Postal Guide.

The Post Office Department requires that the name and address of the sender, preceded by the word "From," be placed upon the wrapper.

Parcel Post packages cannot be registered, but they may be insured at a nominal rate. They may be sent Special Delivery by affixing a

Special Delivery stamp or placing ten cents additional postage upon the wrapper and writing or printing "Special Delivery" upon it. The experience of the writer appears to indicate that Special Delivery Parcel Post packages are usually received earlier than those sent by express or by other carrier method.

Where there are neither letter carriers nor rural delivery, the packages remain in the receiving office, to be called for by the persons to whom they are addressed.

REGISTERED LETTERS

Every post master, no matter how small or insignificant his post office may be, is obliged to register first-class mail, if requested to do so by the sender, for which an additional fee is charged.

Registered mail does not go into the regular mail bags, but is sent in special mail pouches. Every person handling it is obliged to give a receipt. For example, the receiving post master gives the sender a receipt, the carrier taking the mail from the post office to the train receipts for it, the railway mail clerk gives another receipt, and so on until it reaches the one to whom it is addressed, who must, in his turn, receipt for it. It is, therefore, by this method, very easy to trace a lost or misplaced package, and thieves are not likely to tamper with registered mail matter.

Registered mail may be considered as almost absolutely safe, and it should be used by senders of important letters or valuable documents.

MONEY ORDERS

For very nominal fees the Post Office Department will issue money orders, payable at money order offices throughout the world.

The rates are based upon the amount sent.

This is a very safe and convenient way to transport funds and it has an advantage over the bank check because the National Government guarantees the payment.

The Post Office Department, however, limits the amount of money to be sent on any single order, but will issue any number of separate money orders, if requested to do so.

180 *The Art of Letter Writing*

package against loss or damage up to fifty dollars.

Packages cannot be forwarded or remailed from receiving offices without repayment of postage.

When a parcel is insured, the sender receives a receipt from the postmaster, who numbers the parcel, and stamps, "Insured," upon it, and it will not be delivered to the one to whom it is addressed unless he signs a receipt for it, which is returned to the sender.

UNMAILABLE MATTER

Practically everything, which will not injure or endanger the mails, may be sent by the Parcel Post, if it is of the prescribed dimensions and weight.

Infernal machines, intoxicating liquors, poisons, poisonous animals, live insects except queen bees, reptiles, inflammable materials, explosives, mechanical or other compositions likely to ignite or explode, pistols and other firearms, cannot be sent by mail.

Dressed meats, dressed poultry, fish, eggs, vegetables, and other articles of food will be received by Parcel Post, for local delivery only, provided they are properly packed.

If the article is frail, "Fragile" must be written upon the package.

Perishable articles of food will be accepted only when it appears that they will not spoil.

CARE IN MAILING

Thousands, yes, millions, of letters and packages reach the Dead Letter Office and are there opened and returned to senders, if they can be found, because of the carelessness of those who addressed them. Probably half a million letters a year are sent unsealed and at least five per cent. of the writers are not careful to write the address correctly or legibly.

Comparatively few people realize the necessity for proper wrapping, and they send out bundles of every size without sufficient paper or string.

Books should always be packed in pasteboard or in boxes, and this applies to everything else which is likely to be damaged by handling.

As a precaution, I suggest that the name and address be written or printed twice on every package, preceded by the word "To," so that, if one of the addresses is blurred or injured, the other will suffice.

SPECIAL DELIVERY LETTERS

Any letter, or article mailable, will be delivered in every part of the country, if within a mile of the post office, or on a rural free delivery route, if the sender places upon the letter or package, in addition to the regular postage, a special delivery stamp, which costs ten cents. If he does not have a special delivery stamp, his letter or package will go as special delivery, if he adds ten cents additional postage, and writes upon the envelope or wrapper "Special Delivery."

It is not necessary to pay letter postage to secure the delivery of printed matter. Ten cents additional in stamps, placed upon the letter or package, will secure its special delivery.

Special delivery letters may be mailed in the Special Delivery box at the post offices, or handed to the postmaster or clerk, if there is no special delivery receptacle, or they may be mailed in street letter-boxes. If mailed at the post office, they will be immediately handled and placed on the first out-going mail, frequently half an hour or more after the regular

mail is closed. Immediately on their receipt at the receiving post office, they are placed in the hands of deliverers. Ordinarily from one hour's to six hours' time may be saved by sending a letter or package by special delivery, and it will be delivered up to midnight from all post offices, if the office is open at that late hour.

Occasionally a special delivery letter does not reach its receiver as promptly as would an ordinary letter. The last regular mail from Boston to New York City, for example, leaves from between 10 and 11 o'clock P. M. All letters carried in this mail will be delivered in New York early the next morning. The special delivery letters, however, are delivered by special carriers, and they are not allowed to deposit them in private mailing boxes or through the slot in an office door.

POSTAL OR POST CARD WRITING

THE name of the town and date should always appear, and the street address of the writer, if it is not known to the receiver.

Avoid, as you would the plague, writing across writing. It is an insult to the receiver, and is in the worst form.

It is not necessary, and, in fact, I think it is bad form, to say "Dear John," or to use any endearing term on a postal or post card, and I would apply the same rule to the closing. Just sign your name, and omit "Affectionately yours," and avoid closing "With love."

It is also unnecessary, and is inadvisable, to use the terms "Dear Sir," "Gentlemen," "Yours truly," or "Respectfully yours." They can be omitted with perfect taste.

It is obvious that no important matter, either of business or of social purport, should be placed upon a postal or post card. Nothing should be written, except in the way of greetings, or of information, or requests; and, therefore, all expressions of affection, or what would be con-

sidered necessary courtesy in a letter, should be omitted.

Do not use more than the space will conveniently hold. A postal or post card is not intended to take the place of a letter, and any attempt to write a letter upon either of them is bad taste and shows lack of consideration for the receiver.

POST CARDS

A POST CARD should not be confused with a postal card. Postal cards are issued by the Government, post cards by private parties.

A post card can be of any size, but it cannot be used for correspondence if it measures more than $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches from right to left, or more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches from top to bottom.

One half of the address side, and the entire back of the post card, may be used for correspondence..

The following printing is permissible on a post card:

Private Post Card

For Correspondence

For the Address

The word "Private" may be omitted, and "Put stamp here" may be printed in the upper right-hand corner.

Post cards larger than the size mentioned are unmailable, if anything is written upon them other than the names and addresses of the receiver and sender.

By a recent ruling, the words "Post Card" must not be printed except on cards of the size specified.

BUSINESS CARDS

THE ordinary business card may be of any size which will fit an ordinary cardcase or pocketbook, but it need not contain more than the name and address of the business house, with or without the names of the members of the firm or company officials, and the general character of the business.

Do not overcrowd your card.

Do not attempt to place all of your specialties upon a business card. If you are a manufacturer of stoves, for example, simply say "Manufacturer of Stoves."

If you have a trade-mark, it is well to reproduce it, preferably in color.

Always use the plainest type, because simplicity is artistic. Avoid fancy letters, especially if your name and address are not easily read.

Never use other than perfectly plain and clear figures.

I present a few forms of business cards.

Employees of a business house should use one of the following forms:

JOHN T. SMITH & COMPANY

WHOLESALE WOOLENS

300 Main Street

New York City

Represented by
WILLIAM H. BLACK

“Represented by” may be omitted. Another good form is:

William R. Black

With

John T. Smith & Company

WHOLESALE WOOLENS

300 Columbia Street, Portland, Maine

GEORGE M. WHITTAKER

DISTRICT SALES AGENT

REPRESENTING
JOHN HENRY TACK CO.

86 JACKSON BOULEVARD
ROME, N. Y.

Members or officials may use a form like the following:

Smith Manufacturing Co.

Wholesale Woolens

300 Main St., Ottawa, Ont.

JOHN T. SMITH, President

George S. Parkman

Grocer

400 Dear Avenue, Rome, N. Y.

The Starbright Company

PLUMBERS

1400 North Whitefield Street

Boston, Mass.

THOMPSON & GEORGE

DRY GOODS

100 WASHINGTON STREET

ROME, N. Y.

GEORGE I. HANLEY

WILLIAM R. WHITE

GEORGE I. HANLEY & CO.

**REAL ESTATE, FIRE, LIFE AND
PLATE GLASS INSURANCE**

**TELEPHONE
676-L MAIN**

NEWBURGH, N.Y.

WAUGHAN & WHITE
Painters

64 WASHINGTON STREET
BOSTON, MASS.

JOHN T. SMITH & CO.
FLORISTS

FLORAL EMBLEMS AND DECORATIONS A SPECIALTY

CHOICE CUT FLOWERS

GRAND AND WHITNEY AVENUES

PROMPT ATTENTION

DELAWARE, N. Y.

Robert R. Robertson & Co.

Makers of

Fine Furniture

60 Main Street, Worcester, Mass.

Waterson Coal Co.

MINERS OF
ANTHRACITE

COAL

WHOLESALE
ONLY

OFFICE AND YARD

Clark and Davis Streets

TROY, N. J.

ROBERT W. BUCKINGHAM
FASHIONABLE
TAILOR AND OUTFITTER
LADIES' AND GENTLEMEN'S APPAREL
CLAREMONT AVE. NEAR PORTLAND ST.
OPEN EVENINGS TORONTO, ONT.

George & Powers
Oriental Carpets
Carpets and Screens
Market and Second Streets, Boston

WALTER K. WHITEHALL

MINNEAPOLIS

With
WHITE MANUFACTURING CO.

MINNESOTA

Roman type is always in good taste, or any face similar to Roman.

The foregoing specimens are set in type, and may be printed on the ordinary printing press. Engraving is described in another chapter.

Avoid fancy or script faces, as they are difficult to read.

When in doubt use Roman or some style similar to it.

SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL CARDS

SOCIAL and professional cards should be either engraved on copper or steel, or else plain and readable type should be used.

The use of fancy script in both cases should be avoided. Script type is permissible for every class of social or professional card, but many prefer a plainer letter, and I would recommend the latter.

Ordinary Roman type, or any modification of Roman type, which is equally distinct, is in good taste.

It is obvious that the matter upon a card should present legibly its owner's name and address, or his name without his address.

Unusual names should never be printed in script or fancy type. Some names lend themselves to almost any style of letter. Most faces of fancy type contain letters which look very much alike, and these faces should not be used when there is the slightest doubt.

Social and professional cards should not be smaller than three by two and five-eighths inches, nor more than half an inch longer or

198 *The Art of Letter Writing*

deeper. The stock should be thin, not as thin as ordinary paper, but thinner than that used for business cards. The color of the card should be white, cream, or light blue. Other colors are in bad taste.

Some salesmen, and other representatives of business houses, use cards similar to social or professional cards, and there is no objection to so doing.

The title "Mr." is optional on a social or professional card, but I would recommend its use where the address does not appear. It should be omitted on business cards. Titles like "Dr." or "Rev." may be given on a card, with or without the address. "M. D." should be used instead of "Dr." The title "Professor" had better be omitted, and it is a question whether or not degrees like "Ph. D.," "LL. D.," etc., are in good taste.

Military men, however, may print their ranks or positions in the lower left-hand corner, and so may professors and others holding a title of rank.

"Esq." should never appear upon a card, unless it represents some official office. The name and address may be printed in either the left- or right-hand corner, the former being preferable.

Cards produced from steel or copper plates have a richer appearance, and are more artistic.

Two styles of engraved plates are made: the ordinary engraved plate, where the letters are but slightly raised; and the embossed plate, where the letters stand out in relief. Either form is acceptable. Embossed plates, however, cost more to engrave.

The copper-plate should be used where a large quantity of cards are printed, for although it costs more at the start, more impressions can be taken from it.

The copper-plate, however, is sufficient to print as many social or professional cards as the average man or woman will use.

The styles presented are from type, but any of the faces can be reproduced on steel or copper plates.

James M. Ronaldson, M.D.

618 Heyworth Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Mr. Harry O. Whitney

No. 35 Highland Avenue

Philadelphia

Mrs. Hazel Kennedy

Modiste

37 Warren Avenue

Pittsfield, Mass.

Rev. William T. Brown

*1437 Astoria Avenue
New York City*

Mrs. George B. Whitney

Mr. Thomas Boston Lamson

**320 Marlboro Street
Niagara Falls, N. Y.**

Reginald F. Pierce

Elocutionist

Readings
from
Shakespeare

Residence
No. 3621 Westmoreland St.
Montreal, Que.

Mr. John M. Barker

Ralph H. Strang, Jr.

Engineer

Consulting Office
No. 315 Randolph Street
Garden City, Minn.

WILLIAM A. HUNTER
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

ROOM 406
312 COURT SQUARE
BENTON, MASS.

Mrs. George M. Baxter

The following style of letter should be embossed if used for a social card.

Mrs. John G. Barker

26 Claremont Avenue
North Riverside, Conn.

INDEX

- Abbreviations, 149
Acknowledging receipt of money, 98
Addresses on envelopes, 57
Addressing an envelope, 63
Addressing an individual, 20
Addressing, care in, 66
Applications for positions, 103
Applications for a position, letters of, 103
- Business cards, 188
Business letters, 73
Business letters, samples of, 73
- Capitalization, 147
Cards, business, 188
Cards, social and professional, 197
Care in addressing, 66
Care in mailing, 181
Church officials, how to address them, 35
Circular letters, 75
Commendation, letters of, 138
Companies, how to address them, 14
Condolence, letters of, 140
Congratulations, letters of, 138
Copper engraving, 53
Copying letters, 101
Corporations, how to address them, 14
Correctness, 165
- "Dear Mr. Smith," etc., 30
"Dear Sir," "Gentlemen," etc., 30
Degrees in common use, 23
Duplicate or circular letters, 75
- Enclosing poetry in a letter, 161
Enclosing stamps for reply, 70
Enclosures with letters, 92
Ending of a letter, 25
Engraving, copper, 53
Engraving, half-tone, 93
Engraving, lithography, 53
Engraving, photo, 93
Engraving, steel, 53
Envelope, addressing an, 63
Envelope headings, 57
Envelope material, 38
Envelopes, names and addresses on, 57
Envelopes, proper kind of, 36
Envelopes, return, 57
Envelopes, specimens of printing, 57
Envelopes, stamping, 68
Envelopes, transparent, 43
- Figures, use of, 150
Follow-up letters, 81
Foreign countries, letters to, 99
Foreign language, use of, 155
Foreign postage rates, 174
Friends, letters to, 134
- "Gentlemen," 30
Goods, ordering, 90
Governor, how to address him, 34
- Handwriting, 169
How to address a Mayor, 34
How to address an individual, 20
How to address church officials, 35
How to address companies and corporations, 14

How to address the Governor, 34
 How to address the President, 32

How to sign letters, 27
 Humorous letters, 136

Importance of a letter, 9
 Individual, how to address an, 20
 Interlining, 164
 Introduction, letters of, 131

Letter-heads, 44
 Letter-heads, specimens of, 44
 Letter paper and envelope material, 40
 Letters, business, 73
 Letters containing poetry, 161
 Letters, copying them, 101
 Letters, duplicate or circular, 75
 Letters, enclosures with, 92
 Letters, ending of, 25
 Letters, follow-up, 81
 Letters, how to sign, 27
 Letters, importance of, 9
 Letters of application for a position, 103
 Letters of business, 73
 Letters of commendation and congratulation, 138
 Letters of condolence, 140
 Letters of humor, 136
 Letters of introduction, 131
 Letters of proposal, 142
 Letters of solicitation, 83
 Letters, opening of, 14
 Letters, social, 74
 Letters, spacing, 71
 Letters to foreign countries, 99
 Letters to friends, 134
 Letters to officials, 32
 Lithography engraving, 53
 Long words, use of, 156

Mail, sending money by, 97
 Mayor, how to address him, 34
 Military titles, 34
 Money, acknowledging the receipt of, 98
 Money, by mail, 97
 Money orders, 179

Names and addresses on envelopes, 57

Obsolete words, 157
 Officials, how to address them, 32
 Officials, letters to, 32
 Opening of a letter, 14
 Ordering goods, 90

Paragraphing, 145
 Parcel Post, 176
 Parcel Post rates, 178
 Phonetic spelling, 163
 Photo engraving, 93
 Plainness and correctness, 165
 Poetry enclosed in a letter, 161
 Position getting, letters of, 103
 Postal card writing, 184
 Post cards, 186
 Post card writing, 184
 Postage, foreign, 174
 Postage, Parcel Post, 176
 Postage, sufficient, 69
 Post office, the, 171
 President, how to address him, 32
 Proper envelopes, 36
 Proposal, letters of, 142
 Punctuation, 151

Receipt of money, 98
 Registered letters, 178
 Repetition of words, 154
 Rules of punctuation, 151

Samples of applications, 103
 Samples of business cards, 188
 Samples of circular letters, 75
 Samples of duplicate letters, 75
 Samples of envelope corners, 57
 Samples of follow-up letters, 81
 Samples of letter-heads, 44
 Samples of letters of solicitation, 131
 Samples of social and professional cards, 197
 Scientific terms, 158

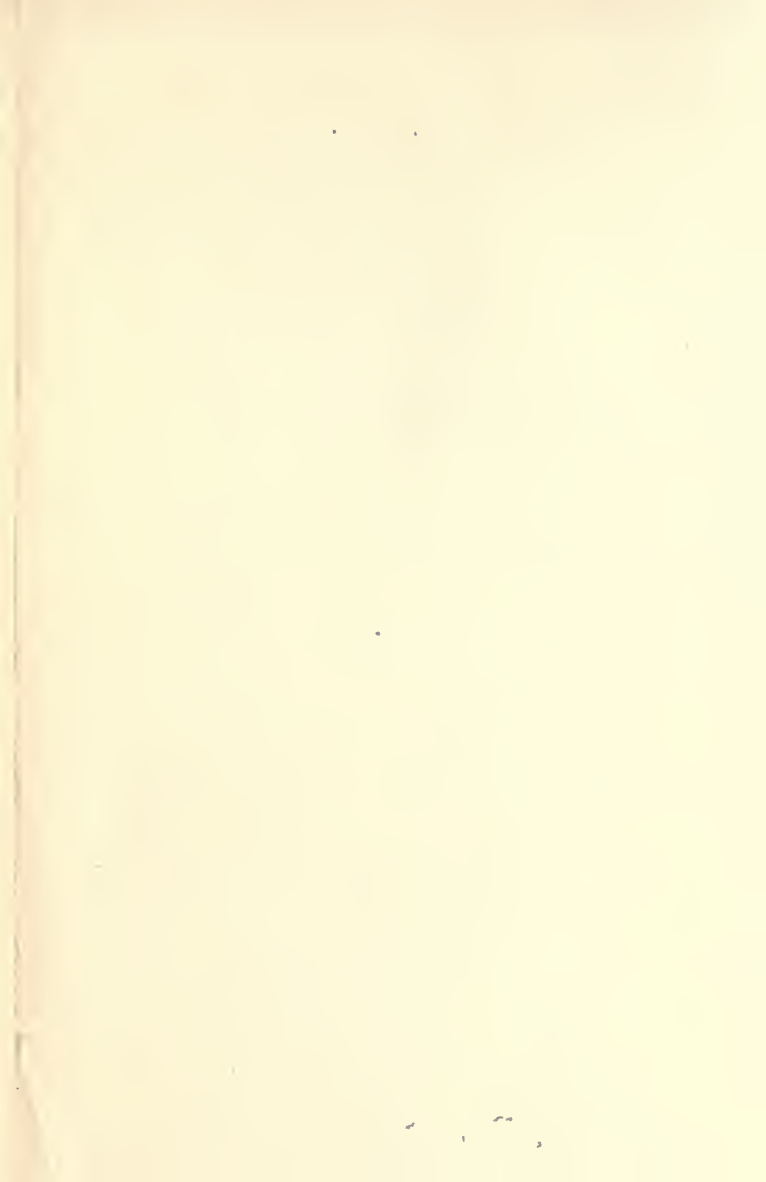
Sending money by mail, 97
Signing letters, 25
Simplicity, 159
Social and professional cards,
197
Social letters, 74
Solicitation, letters of, 83
Spacing between the lines of a
letter, 71
Special delivery letters, 182
Specimen of envelope corners,
57
Specimens of business cards, 188
Specimens of letter heads, 44
Specimens of letters of applica-
tion for a position, 103
Specimens of letters of introduc-
tion, 131
Specimens of social and profes-
sional cards, 197
Spelling, phonetic, 163
Stamp for reply, 70
Stamping envelopes, 68

Steel engraving, 53
Sufficient postage, 69

Technical terms, 158
Titles and degrees in common
use, 23
Titles, military, 19
Transparent envelopes, 43
Typewriter, use of, 167

Unmailable matter, 180
Use of figures, 150
Use of foreign language, 155
Use of long words, 156
Use of the typewriter, 167

Words, obsolete, 157
Words, repetition of, 154
Writing by hand, 169
Writing of technical and scien-
tific terms, 158



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

MAR 12 1962

Form L9-32m-8,'58(5876s4)444

Library
Graduate School of Business Administration
University of California
Los Angeles 24, California

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 245 957 6

